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Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

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For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, please see the East Africa section of the 27 December Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT.

Boats Reportedly Exchange Fire Near Zuqar Island

JN2612185595 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Report by Faysal Mukarram from Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni Red Sea island of Zuqar was shelled by two Eritrean boats that tried to approach the island at 2200 last night. Well-informed sources in Sanaa said the Yemeni garrison returned fire and that the exchange lasted for over 20 minutes and ended when the two boats fled the scene. The sources did not report any casualties on either side.

There has been a change of tone in today's issues of the Yemeni press, which pointed out that Yemen is not incapable of restoring the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir to Yemeni sovereignty by force, if peaceful efforts reach a deadlock. The press warned the Eritrean Government against indulging in attempts to thwart Yemen's peaceful efforts to resolve the dispute and called for drawing up the sea borders between the two countries by peaceful means.

Yemen Foreign Minister: Eritrean Forces To Withdraw

EA2612193395 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni deputy prime minister and minister for foreign affairs, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, has stressed that the aggressive Eritrean forces will soon withdraw from greater Hanish island, and the situation will be restored to what it was before the occupation in mid-December.

'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani said the fate of the island would be determined within the context of international law, the agreement according to maritime law, and historical and legal documents at Yemen's disposal.

Al-Iryani added that the Yemeni prisoners of war would be released through the Red Cross within the next few hours.

Salih Comments on Conflict With Eritrea

LD2612125295 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1020 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 26 Dec — 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, His Excellency the president of the Republic of Yemen, said that he was very content with the good results achieved by the joint Saudi-Yemeni committee during the proceedings of its recent session in Riyadh, a matter which affirmed the depth of the fraternal relations between the two countries.

He added in a statement in today's issue of AL-MADINAH that "His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the second deputy prime minister, minister of aviation and defense, and inspector general, and His Excellency Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni parliament, devoted their efforts to all the issues in the meetings of the joint committees between the two countries."

His excellency expressed optimism in the work of these committees which would continue their proceedings in embodiment of the sincere orientation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Yemen.

Concerning a question about the security border between the two countries, his excellency said "The officials in the kingdom and us are very keen on observing this aspect, and I think that the issue is the subject of interest of the two interior ministries in both countries," and affirmed that there were no differences in the points of view.

His Excellency President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih pointed out that Yemen denounced and fought terrorism in all its forms and methods.

He welcomed any mediation from any sisterly or friendly country for harmony and for resolving the disagreements between Yemen and Eritrea through dialogue and peaceful negotiations. He affirmed Yemen's firm position over this issue, and said that Yemen was against the use of force, and would not resort to it to resolve the current disagreements.

Reiterates 'Peaceful' Resolution

JN2612182095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, welcomed any mediation from any sisterly or friendly country seeking to settle the dispute between our country and Eritrea through dialogue and peaceful negotiations. He stressed our country's firm position on this issue and that it opposes the use of force and did not resort to it to resolve the current disputes.

In a statement to the Saudi AL-MADINAH newspaper published today, the brother president expressed satisfaction with the good outcome of the Yemeni-Saudi joint committee's recent meeting in Riyadh. He said these results underscore the depth of fraternal relations between the two countries. The brother president said that Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the House of Representatives, and His Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi second deputy prime minister and minister of defense and aviation, conduct their work in the best possible way during the joint committee meetings. He expressed optimism regarding the work of these committees, which will continue their work as an embodiment of the sincere intentions of Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Answering a question on the security agreement between the two countries, the brother president said: We and the Saudi officials are very keen on observing this aspect. I believe this issue concerns the Interior Ministries of the two countries. He stressed that there is no difference in viewpoints.

The brother president said that our country denounces and combats all forms and means of terrorism.

Salih Adviser Satisfied With Kuwait 'Understanding'

JN2712075395 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Muhammad Salim Ba-Sindwah, adviser to the president, returned to Sanaa tonight. In a statement upon his return, he expressed satisfaction with the results of his visit.

Brother Ba-Sindwah said that he sensed a good understanding by the brothers in Kuwait of the Yemeni position, which calls for removing the traces of the treacherous Eritrean aggression, so Yemen and Eritrea can begin peace talks and demarcate their maritime borders.

He also hoped that his visit to fraternal Kuwait would be the start of detente between the sisterly countries.

Envoys to Qatar, Bahrain, Syria Comment on Visits

JN2612184295 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Anisi, the deputy prime minister, returned to Sanaa today after visits to the states of Qatar and Bahrain. Al-Anisi conveyed messages from Qatari Amir His Highness Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani and the Bahraini Amir His Highness 'Isa Bin-Salman al-Khalifah. The messages dealt with the new developments in the Red Sea region following the treacherous Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

In a statement to SABA', the deputy prime minister expressed his satisfaction with the results of the visits. The brothers in the two sisterly states expressed their support for our country's position that calls for removing the traces of the treacherous Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island, restoring the situation to what it was before, and starting talks between the two sides to demarcate the sea borders between the two countries, al-Anisi said.

Brother Yahya al-Mutawakkil, the president's adviser, returned to Sanaa from Damascus today after a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic during which he conveyed a message from President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to his brother President Hafiz al-Asad, president of sisterly Syria. The message dealt with the latest developments in the Red Sea region following the treacherous Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

In a statement to SABA', the president's adviser said that he briefed the Syrian president on the Yemeni Republic's position that calls for removing the traces of the treacherous Eritrean aggression and starting talks between the two sides to solve the problem by cordial and peaceful means. He said that he found President Hafiz al-Asad and the brother officials in sisterly Syria completely supportive of the Yemeni position.

Yemeni Clerics Denounce Eritrean 'Aggression'

JN2612064995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemeni ulema have denounced the sinful Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island. A statement issued by the Yemeni ulema says that the heavenly religions and human traditions prohibit the violation of others' rights. The statement urged Eritrea to end the aggression and abide by the language of dialogue and a peaceful solution in a manner that maintains the historical and legal rights.

The statement appealed to Muslim ulema in their institutions, councils, and forums in the Islamic world to [word indistinct] the Eritrean aggression and support the Yemeni people's demand for the removal of the traces of the treacherous aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island.

Analysis Stresses Yemen's Right to Islands

JN2412165395 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

["Analysis" by 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Mu'in from the "News Follow-Up" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Eritrea's aggression against al-Hanish al-Kabir island has proved the soundness of Yemen's firm and principled policy of peaceful dialogue and negotiations as a way to solve all problems with neighbors, particularly border-related problems. Since Eritrea's invasion of the Yemeni island and even since border problems with Yemen's neighbors surfaced, the Yemeni Republic has been determined to pursue the policy of peaceful dialogue as the best way to preserve the rights of all parties and maintain good relations with its neighbors.

This policy is the only right and reasonable way to enhance joint cooperation between Yemen and its neighbors in all vital areas. This policy worked in negotiations with the Sultanate of Oman that resulted in a border demarcation agreement in October 1992, stable relations with the brothers in Oman, and more positive cooperation. A memorandum of understanding was also signed with the brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 26 February, and joint committees were formed to reach a final solution to the problem in light of the joint rights and interests and the objective options approved by the two sides.

Today, despite Eritrea's aggression, provocation, and flagrant challenge to Yemen's sovereignty and right, the Yemeni Republic is adhering to the principle of political dialogue and peaceful solution regardless of the Eritrean leader's insistence on aggression. Hence, observers and commentators are almost unanimous that the political leadership in the country under Lieutenant General leader President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih is facing the first difficult test of its kind in its relations with its neighbors in particular and other countries in general. It is indeed a difficult test and choice. At the same time, it expresses the confidence of the political leadership in its stand on this issue; in Yemen's legitimate right to and firm policy toward the island; in the full national support of all the factions, organizations, and parties of the people; and in the strong pan-Arab support for Yemen by all the brothers inside and outside the Arabian Peninsula.

This test also shows international support for Yemen's right on the one hand and for political dialogue and peaceful solution as a firm principle in the face of the aggression on the other. The test, however, may be less difficult than wasting time and effort to clarify what is already clear, to stress what is already proved, and to use existing things to prove existence. All the waters, islands, borders, and affiliation of the Yemeni islands in the Yemeni territorial waters have been Yemeni since historical times that are impossible to define and even to think to define because this will lead to futile questions and dialogue like asking when Yemen began to be Yemen, when it and its land became a homeland for the Yemenis, and when its inhabitants became Yemeni people.

As the president told the people last Wednesday, the islands are Yemeni because they exist within the Yemeni border and because they have been under Yemeni sovereignty for ages. This element represents the strongest evidence in international law and charters and in the sacred books. In addition, Eritrea itself implicitly recognizes this Yemeni right in maps, which it has produced for the past three years or after its independence. Therefore, Eritrea did not fix these island within its border. This is also the same in the official Yemeni, regional, Arab, and international maps. Also, Ethiopia, which ruled Eritrea, recognizes Yemen's firm right to the islands.

In accordance with the international maritime law, which was signed by the Yemeni Republic, the islands are Yemeni because, in addition to other evidence, they are nearer to the Yemeni coast. Since the Eritrean leaders believe that Yemen's right refutes all their claims and aggression, they will resort to rejection, provocation, and challenge. This has actually begun, but lies and the aim of aggression will soon be revealed because they are weaker than the cobweb.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Former Syrian Negotiator To Take League Post

JN2512180495 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1655 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Dec (SANA)—Muwafaq al-'Allaf will assume his duties as the Arab League assistant secretary general for international political affairs to replace 'Adnan 'Umran, whose term expired this month.

Al-'Allaf will be sworn in on 31 December before Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid.

The Arab League Council endorsed the Syrian nomination of al-'Allaf as assistant secretary general during its last meeting last September.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 19 Dec

NC2412073595

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 19 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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U.S. MEDIA REPORTING ON ELECTIONS REGRETTED

In a 370-word report on the front page, Mahmud Bakri reviews British, Swiss, and Italian analyses of Egypt's recent parliamentary elections. He says study centers in Europe are unanimous that Egypt's recent elections destroyed the experiment of the multiparty system in the country.

He says Cairo informed Washington that it "regrets" the U.S. media and "several U.S. political circles'" repetition of opposition leaders' accusations about the recent elections. He adds that the government alleged that the "relationship between the government and opposition in Egypt is nationalistic" and that internal differences do not affect "unanimity on crucial issues."

ISLAMIC TREND CANDIDATES IN AL-MANUFIYAH THANK VOTERS

Page 1 runs a 140-word, boxed advertisement for the Islamic trend candidates in al-Manufiyah Governorate. They thank the electorate for voting in the recent elections.

Addressing voters, the candidates say: Your support for the Islamic trend candidates expressed your "consciousness, desire for change, and your eagerness to deliver trust and contribute to reform." The candidates add that the voters' support "was the best evidence" of their love of Islam and their support for its advocates.

The candidates tell them that they "have managed to break the barrier of fear" and that positive action has begun and "we will not revert to negativeness."

IMF ASKS EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT TO RAISE PRICES 100%

A 130-word report on the front page says the IMF has asked the Egyptian Government to step up economic measures, primarily in implementing plans to raise prices by over 100 percent.

The unattributed report adds that the IMF recently criticized the government for poor economic growth and inaccurate statistics on the issue.

CROATS REPORTEDLY KILL ARAB MUJAHIDIN LEADER IN BOSNIA

A 250-word front-page report says the Italian Islamic Cultural Institute "revealed serious details on the assassination of Egyptian national Shaykh Sha'ban." It adds that the shaykh "commanded the Arab mujahidin battalion in Bosnia that carried out heroic operations supporting the Muslims there and repulsing the Serb aggression."

The report, filed by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah, says the institute distributed a statement in the Italian city of Milan saying that Shaykh Sha'ban was murdered by "the Croat criminals" on 14 December when he was driving through a Croatian town along with four mujahidin.

LABOR PARTY LEADER ATTACKS USE OF EMERGENCY LAW IN ELECTIONS

Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri writes a 720-word article on pages 1 and 8 criticizing the government's application of the emergency law in the recent elections.

In the article, "The Election File is Not Closed; The Emergency Law Facilitated the Forging of the Nation's Will," he says officials' reactions to "the bitter criticism and charges of forgery against the government" made no mention of the emergency law. This, he adds, is despite the emergency law, imposed on the country in 1981, being "the main reason behind the success of election rigging and acts of violence, hooliganism, and arrests carried out by the State agencies."

Shukri says that by applying the emergency law, the police arrested over 700 candidate delegates and the law was used against both candidates and voters.

He adds: "Events during the elections proved that everything we say is true. We said the emergency law was not intended only to confront terrorism, but was also designed against the various trends of the opposition forces." He continues: "Under the emergency law, the government encircles the parties and their activities and arrests and tries opposition leaders and journalists."

He notes that in the presence of the emergency law, parties cannot carry out their "legitimate activities and the law becomes "an unsheathed sword against everyone."

He urges "the largest political campaign" to include the people in the decisionmaking process, "because people, not just the parties, are the decisionmakers." He says parties and intellectual and political trends should enhance "their cohesion with the people."

CHIEF EDITOR CRITICIZES MUBARAK'S SPEECH, ELECTION RIGGING

Page 2 of AL-SHA'B runs a 1,000-word article by Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn. He says President Mubarak's speech before "the so-called" People's Assembly contained nothing new. He adds that the speech "defied the feelings of the whole nation, which saw with its own eyes, not through foreign correspondents and Egyptian papers, the tragedy of stealing parliament's seats."

He says the speech eclipsed the nation's sentiments and that this alone was a bad omen for things to come "if the nationalist forces do not unite to avert an escalating national disaster." He adds that the interior minister and Interior Ministry's statements on the elections were "more objective" than the president's speech. The reason, he notes, is because "these statements admitted incidents of forgery and violence but the president's speech did not wish to tarnish a clean sheet with a speck of ink."

He says: "The most serious thing about this speech was that it ignored the entire nation's shock. It was tantamount to an explicit declaration that we are governed by force, material force, not by persuasion, logic, or guidance."

The chief editor says there should be an "impregnable barrier made up of honest opposition forces so that the ghoul of autocracy will not swallow what little democracy that remains."

AL-HUDAYBI THANKS VOTERS, NOTES "ISLAM IS THE SOLUTION" MOTTO

In a 300-word advertisement on page 2, Muhammad Ma'mun al-Hudaybi thanks "everyone who answered the call to vote in the 1995 People's Assembly elections and everyone who backed the Islamic trend in these elections." He says "Islam is the solution" is not just an electioneering slogan, "but a call for reverting to the genuine Islam."

LABOR PARTY OFFICIALS CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT'S ELECTION RIGGING

In a 1,400-word report on page 3, correspondent Ahmad Mahjub says Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri and Secretary General 'Adil Husayn attended a mass rally in Shirbin "last Friday," the first rally after the "massacre of the recent elections."

At the gathering, Shukri criticized the use of the emergency law in recent elections. Husayn says: "We are told that the elections have ended and the situation is settled so forget it. But we will not forget." He adds that the people will not forget "their slain dignity and the major crime that has been committed." He says: "The People's Assembly they have formed is forged and bogus and it will not earn legitimacy, whatever they do. We must struggle until we bring it down."

LABOR PARTY LEADER COMMENTS ON ELECTIONS

A 2,000-word unattributed report on the same page says Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri met people in Marakz Shirbin after Friday prayers last week. Answering people's questions, he is cited as saying that after the first and second rounds of the elections, everyone knew the People's Assembly would have no credibility. He is also cited as saying that anything that is not based on right and justice will not last and that "the day when this oppression ends is bound to come."

RULING PARTY'S ANTI-COPT ELECTION POLICY CRITICIZED

In a 2,000-word report on page 3, Qutb al'Arabi criticizes the ruling National Democratic Party's [NDP] election policy. He says people saw NDP candidates' cars and processions roaming streets, chanting against the Copts, urging people to vote only for Muslim members of the party, not Copts. Regrettably, he adds, this took place within the sight and hearing of the police, who failed to refer those who "caused sedition to the State prosecution."

DEPUTY GENERAL GUIDE MASHHUR DEFENDS MUSLIM BROTHERS

Mustafa Mashhur, deputy general guide of the Muslim Brothers, writes an approximately 1,000-word article on page 5, defending the Brothers' policy and acts. He says their record will remain clean despite the predicaments they are suffering and despite the arrests and verdicts against them.

He adds that the "enemies of Islam resort to harming the advocates of God, smearing their call for the cause of God, detaining them, and killing some of them." He says "the enemies" tried to accuse the Brothers of violence and terrorism and of supporting terrorist groups. But they failed. The Brothers, he adds, publicly advocate God with wisdom and good advice in a way that is far removed from violence and terrorism. The Brothers, he continues, advocate reform, stability, and the preservation of Egypt's standing and credibility. He says the Brothers call for applying Islamic shari'ah, "which is the only and ideal solution to all the problems of humanity."

LABOR PARTY BODY DENOUNCES ARREST OF JORDANIAN FIGURE

A 320-word unattributed report on page 8 says the Labor Party Engineers Secretariat has issued a statement denouncing the arrest of Layth Shubaylat, head of the Jordanian Engineers Union. It also criticizes the Jordanian authorities over the arrest.

STUDENTS FREED, DETENTION OF BROTHERS' SUPPORTERS CONTINUES

A 260-word report on the same page, filed by 'Ala' al-Bahhar and Dawud Hasan, says the State prosecution has freed 51 university students detained since February. The report notes that they were arrested during Cairo University demonstrations denouncing the Brothers' arrest and trials and refusing normalization with "the Zionist enemy."

The report also says that in pursuing their policy against the Muslim Brothers, security authorities are still holding over 1,500 people in various governorates.

WRITER CRITICIZES ARTS, MEDIA PROGRAMS

In a 720-word article on page 11, Dr. Hilmi Muhammad al-Qa'ud criticizes the current status of arts and media programs in the country. He says the status of art in Egypt heralds a "great danger." He adds that what is seen and heard on "big and small screens and in theaters and on video and audio cassettes does not represent the nation's values, faith, traditions, or morals." He notes that such material mirrors the arts in the West, "contradicting the nation's dream and hopes."

COLUMNIST REBUKES JEWS

In his 360-word article on page 12, prominent writer Muhammad al-Ghazali rebukes the Jews, accusing them of reneging on their commitments. He says: The "Jews" promised 'Arafat that they would free Palestinian women prisoners but their prime minister refused to fulfill the promise and the prisoners remained in jail.

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 19 Dec

NC2312090595

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 19 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Al-Azhar Scholars Heap Praise on Mubarak's Interview
2. Al-Azhar Critical of French Author's Book on Koran
3. Student Who Had Sex-Change Operation Denied University Seat
4. Writer Warns Against Muslim Extremist Activity in London
5. Islamic World Relief and Call Council Official Interviewed

AL-AZHAR SCHOLARS HEAP PRAISE ON MUBARAK'S INTERVIEW

In an unattributed 100-word report on page 1, the newspaper says the al-Azhar and al-Awqaf scholars are unanimous that President Mubarak's instructions to scholars and preachers through his "comprehensive" interview with 'AQIDATI last week form a "strong basis" for preaching activity based on full knowledge of religious issues and opening up to the world. Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabbur Marzuq, deputy chairman of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, says: "If we adhere to President Mubarak's instructions, the universality of Islam will be achieved." Further details of these scholars' views and remarks are published on pages 12 and 13.

AL-AZHAR COMMITTEE CRITICAL OF FRENCH AUTHOR'S BOOK ON KORAN

An unattributed 100-word report on page 1 says a scientific committee formed by Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar Jad-al-Haq 'Ali Jad-al- Haq has prepared a comprehensive report on a book by French orientalist Jacques Burke entitled a "Rereading of the Koran." The committee said the translation of the Koran and the accompanying commentary contain several errors that besmirch the principles of Islam. The French orientalist casts doubt on the Muslims' belief that the Koran was revealed by God. He also claims that the Koran contains "many contradictions and trivial subjects." The committee "refuted" the French orientalist's allegations and his propagation of ideas that "cast doubt on the book of God."

STUDENT WHO HAD SEX-CHANGE OPERATION DENIED UNIVERSITY SEAT

An unattributed 300-word report on page 2 says al-Azhar University has rejected a plea from Sally Muhammad 'Abdallah to join the College of Medicine for Women after s/he was dismissed from the College of Medicine for Men after sex-change surgery, which changed him from a male called Sayyid to a female called Sally. The university claims that it is within its jurisdiction to accept or reject any student and notes that Sally practices "belly dancing," which is inconsistent with the Islamic moral codes of the university. To substantiate its decision, al-Azhar University notes that the Doctors Association struck off the doctor who performed the operation because such operations "codify prostitution and sodomy." The prosecutor then acquitted the doctor on "the pretext that the operation was necessary."

WRITER WARNS AGAINST MUSLIM EXTREMIST ACTIVITY IN LONDON

In a 500-word column on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani warns against the "extremists" who openly carry out their activities and collect donations following the Friday prayers at the Islamic Center in London. These extremists frankly admit that the donations are for the "mujahidin" in Algeria and Egypt. The writer says he appreciates the British authorities' hospitality and respect for freedoms but notes that there is a difference between those who search for security and stability in other countries and those who have enlisted themselves and their funds to spread fear and spill blood "just because they have failed to achieve their objectives of seizing power in their own countries." The writer says the "networks that support terrorism" in London are not working clandestinely. They announce on loudspeakers that they support the "mujahidin in Algeria and Egypt." They publish leaflets in Arabic and other languages calling for support for the "armed Islamic groups" in these two countries.

ISLAMIC WORLD RELIEF AND CALL COUNCIL OFFICIAL INTERVIEWED

On pages 8 and 9, the newspaper publishes a 2,000-word interview with Kamil al-Sharif, secretary general of the Islamic World Council for Call and Relief, by Chief Editor al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf. The date and place of the interview are not given. In answer to a question, al-Sharif says most Islamic states support and facilitate the council's relief work but that some of them obstruct the council's Islamic call activity because they favor and prefer their own preachers. He says the council's policy and activity are not directed against any Islamic country or government and that this "sensitivity" will disappear one day although this will not be easy. He admits that there "is no quick solution" to this problem. In answer to another question, al-Sharif denies that charitable organizations' funds are being channeled to terrorist groups. He says it is wrong to "generalize" or to level "haphazard accusations" and adds that each case must be examined and judged separately. He asserts that the council rejects terrorism and violence. Al-Sharif says Iraq is a member of the council but does not attend its meetings because of objections by some Arab states. He adds that Iran has not joined the council yet for "doctrinal" and other reasons. He notes that for a country to join the council, it must secure the approval of all the council's members. He says the council has spent $80 million in aid in Bosnia and $40 million in Somalia.

Palestinian Affairs

Al-Khalil To Challenge 'Arafat for Presidency

TA2712114395 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 27 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "If I am elected, I will use all my power to abolish the Oslo Accords and to stop the implementation of the redeployment," Samiha al-Khalil from al-Birah, the only candidate challenging Yasir 'Arafat for the presidency of the Palestinian Authority [PA], stated yesterday.

Al-Khalil called a news conference in a building belonging to the charity society she runs in al-Birah to officially announce her candidacy and reveal her election platform. She recounted that in just four days 7,000 people had signed her candidacy petition, and proceeded to field questions in an informal, firm, and direct manner. Seated next to her was her election campaign adviser, attorney 'Ala al-Bakri.

Al-Khalil, who is close to Palestinian opposition circles, particularly the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], categorically rejected the Oslo Accords "which do not provide the Palestinians even their minimum demands; namely, full sovereignty and independence." According to her, the Oslo Accords created Palestinian cantons surrounded by Israelis, who actually continue to rule all spheres of life of the Palestinian population. "Israel ignored the hand we stretched out in peace in 1988, and it continues to do the same today," she stated. [passage omitted]

Al-Khalil said Israel must disband all the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, withdraw to the 1967 borders, and allow the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Only then will there be a permanent comprehensive peace in the region, she stated, as she called on all Palestinian factions to unite for the sake of upholding the Arab nature of Jerusalem.

In the social sphere, al-Khalil asserted that she would strive for the democratization of the government and society, for the rule of law, and for equality between women and men. She said she would devote special efforts to improve the education system, and stressed that if elected she would follow the principle of "the right man for the right job, without any favoritism." [passage omitted]

Al-Khalil has to date refused to speak to Jews either in Israel or abroad, including journalists, or even shake hands with them. "Today is the first time that Jews entered my office of my own free will," she said. She pointed out that if elected she will not revoke the clauses in the Palestine National Covenant referring to the elimination of the State of Israel, unless the Palestinians are awarded all the rights in accordance with the Palestine National Council resolutions of 1988. Only then will she be ready to put the issue to a referendum, she affirmed.

Al-Khalil promised that if elected head of the PA she will work in cooperation with Yasir 'Arafat, who will retain his job as chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. "I entered the presidential elections to make my voice heard, because I love Palestine, and because I believe that the situation is worsening with every passing day," she said.

PA, Hamas Officials View Dialogue, Elections

PA's 'Urayqat

NC2412093795 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, former PA minister of local government, in Bethlehem, by Muhammad al-Aswad in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Aswad] The Palestinian land and people are experiencing happy events. Bethlehem is celebrating Christmas under the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the Palestinian flag. Yesterday, the city hosted a PA meeting. How do you see all this and what is its significance in your view?

['Urayqat] We are witnessing historic days in the Arab and Palestinian people's history as Palestinian land is gradually liberated. The process was crowned by the liberation of Bethlehem, the city of Christ, may peace be upon him.

The PA met last night and discussed major issues, most importantly the progress of [?redeployment], which is due to be completed by the end of this month, and the issue of elections.

The ministers submitted their resignations in preparation for legislative and presidential elections set for 20 January.

Palestinian political life is experiencing very great winds of change. There are over 500 candidates in these elections competing for 83 seats. We are celebrating historic days in the Arab and Palestinian people's history. We hope the gradual liberation of Palestinian land will continue, eventually leading to an independent state with holy Jerusalem as its capital, God willing. [passage omitted]

[Al-Aswad] An announcement was made on the formation of a higher committee for elections chaired by Mahmud 'Abbas, a member of the Fatah Central Committee. Could you shed light on this committee and its tasks?

['Urayqat] I personally chaired the committee charged with local government elections and we prepared for the Palestinian elections. As stipulated in the law, a central committee for elections must now be formed to supervise elections. We submitted our resignation from the previous committee and a new committee chaired by Abu-Mazin has been formed. The basic task of this committee is to conduct elections. In a special presidential decree, the president formed a court of appeals to deal with election issues and seats have been distributed in the electoral constituencies. I believe everything is ready for the elections and Egypt will honor us by sending observers along with 32 other countries' representatives. We are proud that these will be the first elections for us as Palestinian people on our own country's soil.

[Al-Aswad] Have you nominated yourself for these elections? For which area?

['Urayqat] Yes. I am a candidate for the Jericho constituency, which has been allocated one seat.

[Al-Aswad] Negotiations were held in Cairo recently between the PA and representatives from Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement], which resulted in progress toward Palestinian reconciliation. How do you assess these results?

['Urayqat] Let us just say the meeting took place. We thank Egypt for hosting it in Cairo. We hope it will be a prelude to further meetings and that the Palestinian people's higher interests will be placed above any other consideration. Regarding its assessment, as I said, let the meeting be a beginning, a staging point, not an end.

Hamas' al-Zahhar

JN2612160395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1230 GMT 26 Dec 95

[From the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] The dialogue recently held between the National Authority and the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement has been described as positive. Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar [a Hamas leader] stressed the importance of holding further meetings between the two sides, and spoke to this program about the recent dialogue in Cairo. He said that the results of this dialogue are important to Hamas.

[Begin recording] [al-Zahhar] First, the results of this dialogue represent an initial step. They are not all that is required. The results are not all that many optimistic people expected, and are not a failure as some had hoped.

The results of this dialogue are an initial step on which many steps can be built that would lead us all to the stage of integration and to the means to formulate a future positive relationship that would serve the interest of the Palestinian people.

[Unidentified Correspondent] We heard that another dialogue will be held between the National Authority and Hamas at the end of this month!

[Al-Zahhar] There should be continuous meetings between us as Palestinians inside and outside the territories so as to solve pending as well as new problems, and to reformulate the relationship in order to serve everyone.

[Correspondent] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a statement in the name of Hamas was recently distributed calling for boycotting the upcoming elections. What is your comment on this?

[Al-Zahhar] My comment on this issue appeared in the newspapers today and yesterday. Hamas is represented by the negotiators from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and outside the territories. They signed a joint press statement, which, in form and substance, clearly states that no one should be forced to adopt a stand that contradicts his beliefs.

We are not forcing people to boycott the elections. Moreover, we are not forcing people to go to the ballot boxes. This is Hamas' stand. Any other stand will be a contradiction.

[Correspondent] So, regarding the statement, do you think that there are outside parties seeking to create some sort of conflict between you and the National Authority?

[Al-Zahhar] Actually, I do not know the source of the statement, but I know Hamas' constant stand on this issue which I already made clear.

[Correspondent] Could the party which distributed the statement be, for example, a party that is following a different policy within the Hamas Movement?

[Al-Zahhar] As I told you. I do not know where, how, or which party issued this statement. However, there is no need to repeat what I already said.

[Correspondent] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar. What prevents you from nominating yourself for the elections?

[Al-Zahhar] I belong to a movement and I am committed to its opinion and decision. Hence, I will not depart from the movement's opinion regardless of anyone's beliefs.

[Correspondent] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a leader of Hamas, thank you very much.

[Al-Zahhar] Thanks be to God. [end recording]

Hamas' Nazzal

JN2612202495 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 26 Dec 95 p 15

[Interview with Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in Jordan, by 'Atif al-Julani; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpts] [al-Julani] There were conflicting views on the success or failure of the dialogue with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Cairo. What is your assessment of the outcome of the dialogue?

[Nazzal] Success or failure is something relative. I believe the Cairo dialogue was successful in that the two sides affirmed the need to resort to dialogue as a civilized approach in settling disputes, resolving conflicts, and avoiding fighting among Palestinians themselves, which if it occurs, God forbid, will turn Palestine into another Afghanistan or Somalia. Therefore, I believe this is a positive result in the theoretical sense. But only practical reality can show whether or not this is true.

[Al-Julani] Do you think the Palestinian Authority will adhere to what was agreed on?

[Nazzal] For our part, we are committed to what we say and agree on. It is the other party's responsibility if they fail to comply with the agreements. However, I believe that if this were to happen, we would be excused before God, our Palestinian people, and our Arab and Islamic nation, because we have done all we could to avoid fighting and disappoint those wagering on this to happen.

[Al-Julani] But al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, the Palestinian Authority secretary general, said that the outcome of the dialogue was absolute zero. This conflicts with what you said about a relative success.

[Nazzal] It seems that some of the Authority figures and symbols measure success and failure by how far their demands have been met. They came to persuade Hamas to participate in the elections and halt its military action. When this did not materialize, they began talking about the dialogue's failure and the so-called absolute zero. However, we look at the matter from another angle. Honestly speaking, the head of the Palestinian Authority delegation Abu-al-Adib [Salim al-Za'nun] said the meeting was a success, which indicates that there are differences in points of view among the members of the Palestinian delegation themselves. [passage omitted]

[Al-Julani] In the final statement after the Cairo talks, there was a controversial sentence with regard to your call to boycott the elections. What is the reality of the situation?

[Nazzal] Our position on the participation in the self-rule elections is clear and final. We will not participate directly or indirectly. In a joint statement with the 10 Palestinian factions, we called on the Palestinian masses to support our position. We also said in our joint statement with the Palestinian Authority that we will not force anyone to adopt this position. In other words, we will not use force to prevent anyone from taking part in the elections. Our position should not be misinterpreted. [passage omitted]

[Al-Julani] The phrase "not force anyone to boycott the elections" has triggered some debate and controversy as did the phrase "Hamas does not aim at embarrassing the Authority". Some people interpreted this as a sort of pledge by Hamas to halt military action in the self-rule areas under the Palestinian Authority. What is your comment on this?

[Nazzal] I think that we all understand Arabic and are aware of the meaning of words. There are certain parties within the Authority and outside who benefit from misrepresenting Hamas positions and interpreting its statements in a manner that conflicts with actual words.

The phrase "Hamas does not aim at embarrassing the Authority" is clear and I do not think it needs to be explained. Our resistance of the occupation is not aimed at embarrassing the authority, rather we are practicing a legitimate right in resisting occupation which is still plaguing our land, even after all the agreements that have been signed.

[Al-Julani] Then you have not made pledges to the Authority to halt your resistance against occupation in the self-rule areas?

[Nazzal] We promised no one, whether inside our outside the self-rule area, to halt our resistance.

[Al-Julani] Palestinian Authority and press sources said Khalid Mash'al was appointed as head of the Hamas Political Bureau to replace Musa Abu-Marzuq. How true is this?

[Nazzal] Until now, no one has replaced Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, may God bring his release closer. He is still the head of the movement's political bureau.

'Arafat To Appoint 'Abbas, Yasin to Council

TA2712060495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transliterated Text] Palestinian Authority [PA] officials say the additional five representatives to the legislative council, under an agreement with Peres, will not be elected in the upcoming vote. Apparently, they will be appointed by 'Arafat. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says the PLO leader will possibly appoint Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] who signed an agreement in principle to the posts. [In a related report, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0505 GMT on 27 December adds that 'Arafat will thus be "marking Abu-Mazin as second in command."]

Samiha al-Khalil, the woman challenging 'Arafat to head the PA has pledged to work against the PLO-Israel self-rule accords. The 70-year-old charity worker and political activist said Palestinians want an independent state with real sovereignty.

PLO officials have said 'Arafat was pleased al-Khalil was running against him because he wanted the elections to be a genuine contest.

PFLP, DFLP Call For Council Elections

TA2412114795 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 24 Dec 95 p 10

[Report by 'Imad al-Ifranji]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] have called for free and direct elections for a Palestine national council. The elections would be held on the basis of proportional representation and one constituency without discrimination against race, color, and religion in accordance with the proclamation of independence.

A statement issued by the two Fronts and distributed yesterday in Gaza said that these proposed elections will ensure the participation of all the Palestinian people inside and outside, secure the people's unity, and preserve the PLO's role as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and activate its role and institutions.

The two Fronts condemned the holding of the self-rule council elections, which are governed by the Oslo-Taba conditions, while thousands of detainees and prisoners are languishing in Israeli jails, the Judaization of Jerusalem and the eradication of its Arab features is continuing, the settlements are being retained, and the Palestinian people in the diaspora are deprived of their right to return to their homeland. The two Fronts affirmed their boycott of the elections.

The statement said that these elections are based on a law that will revive tribal and class rule. Consequently, the elections will strike at the essence of the program adopted by the PLO, which is based on the principle of national coalition and ensuring the people's unity in the homeland and the diaspora.

The two Fronts asserted that the holding of democratic and free elections for a Palestine national council will strengthen the Palestinian position in confronting the humiliating Israeli conditions. It would then be possible to renegotiate on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy in a way that would ensure a just and comprehensive solution to our national problem — the realization of repatriation, self-determination, and an independent state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Salvation Party Not To Field Candidates

TA2612152895 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 24 Dec 95 p 8

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, QUDS PRESS — Fikri 'Abd-al-Latif, media spokesman of the Islamic National Salvation Party in the Palestinian territories, announced that his party will not nominate anyone for the upcoming elections. 'Abd-al-Latif described the results of the dialogue between Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Palestinian Authority in Cairo as "a positive step for clearing and improving the Palestinian climate."

Fatah Members Forbidden Candidacy as Independents

TA2612153295 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 24 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Khamis al-Turk]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, the Jerusalem Media Office — A high-ranking and reliable Fatah source who refused to reveal his name has stressed that the nomination of any Fatah candidate who also nominates himself as an independent will be withdrawn. He added that anyone who does not abide by this decision will not be regarded as a member of Fatah, and all his rights and prerogatives will be rescinded.

Fatah members praised this decision and hoped that everyone would adhere to it so that Fatah will always remain a force emulated by all Palestinian factions.

Decree Establishes Election Appeal Court

TA2612162295 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 24 Dec 95 p 8

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, WAFA — President Yasir 'Arafat yesterday issued presidential decree No. 4 on the elections. The decree calls for the establishment of an elections appeals court. He appointed Judge Zuhayr al-Surani to preside over the court. Following is the text of the decree:

Presidential decree No. 4 of 1995 regarding the elections
Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee
Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority

After becoming cognizant of law No. 5 of 1995 regarding the transfer of powers and authorities and of the Palestinian elections law of 1995, and by virtue of the powers vested in us, we issued the following decree:

The establishment of an elections appeals court composed of:

1. Judge Zuhayr al-Surani, president

2. Judge 'Abdallah Ghazlan
3. Judge 'Imad Salim
4. Judge Sami Saba
5. Judge Shukri al-Nashashibi

Issued in Gaza city on 23 December 1995, corresponding to 1 Sha'ban 1416 Hegira.

Agreement Reached on Jerusalem Elections

TA2612153695 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 25 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Muhammad Abu-Khudayr]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jerusalem — A meeting was held yesterday at the Moriah Hotel in West Jerusalem. The meeting dealt with the implementation of the special arrangements for elections in the Jerusalem constituency. The Palestinian delegation was headed by Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat; the Israeli side by Yo'el Singer, Israeli Foreign Ministry legal adviser. The two sides agreed on the following:

— To set up 11 voting centers in the five agreed-on post offices.
— Places for election placards inside Jerusalem.
— Freedom of movement for all candidates in the Jerusalem constituency.
— All election arrangements will be made under international observers' supervision.
— Candidates' representatives will enjoy full freedom.
— The press will be granted full freedom to cover the election campaign and the voting centers.

Dr. 'Urayqat told AL-QUDS that the Palestinian side submitted a list of 38 places for election propaganda in Jerusalem and that the Israeli side promised to give an answer on 26 December.

He added that agreement was reached to set up a committee to follow up electoral problems daily in the Jerusalem constituency. [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Peres, 'Arafat Agree To Expand Council to 88

TA2612114995 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Dec 95 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In secret discussions between the Prime Minister's Bureau and Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres agreed to 'Arafat's request to expand the elected Palestinian council from 83 members to 88.

Permission to increase the number of council members was given to the Palestinians last night via Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of government activities in the territories. In fact, the Palestinian council will now have 89 members since PA Chairman 'Arafat should be added to the list. The approval is seen as another step towards the establishment of a Palestinian parliament in the territories, something Israel fervently opposes.

At first, the Palestinians demanded that Israel permit them to set up a 130-member council. Israel flatly opposed, agreeing only to a 40-member body claiming that it does not want the council to be the size of a parliament, a characteristic of a sovereign state. [passage omitted] In the long run it was agreed that the Palestinians would set up a 83-member council, not including 'Arafat.

However, in their meeting three weeks ago, 'Arafat asked to expand the council by five members, and approval was given.

Dissatisfaction was expressed about the move by Israelis involved in the negotiations, who said that there is concern that 'Arafat would appoint a deputy without receiving Israel's approval, thereby effectively expanding the council to 90, "which is really a parliament."

Algeria

Government, Governors Hold Conference in Algiers

Sifi: Terrorism Hindered Government

LD2312143195 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi opened the second meeting between the government and the 48 [provincial] governors in the Palais des Nations [conference hall] at the Club de Pins in Algiers this morning. The prime minister gave a speech in which he stressed that the meeting was to assess the outcome of [government] policy, identify problems, and propose appropriate solutions.

In the opening speech, Mokdad Sifi said that if it had not been for terrorism and sabotage, the government would have been able to achieve far more. Mokdad Sifi talked about terrorism and the hell that some people had thrown themselves into.

We will now contact our colleague, Ahmed Charbati, at the Palais des Nations.

[Charbati] The meeting opened at about 1000 with a brief statement by Mustapha Benmansour, the minister of interior, local communities, environment and administrative reforms. At the beginning of the speech, he said that the assessment meeting, which coincided with a presentation of the final outcome of the government's work at the end of the year, was aimed essentially at explaining the efforts made by the local communities in dealing with the resolution of the daily problems faced by citizens.

After that, the head of government, Mokdad Sifi, addressed the meeting. He stressed that the government's activities could only be judged by the citizens.

He said that in April 1994 we committed ourselves to a government policy based on three main axes, namely: The commitments made by Algeria to the international monetary institutions after the appointment of the current government; the objectives outlined in the national conciliation platform; and the promotion of national conciliation so that sacrifices [tadhiyat] and benefits would be equally, fairly, and justly distributed among everyone.

After pointing out that he had been aware of the public and undeclared stances of those opposed to the break with the past — who did everything they could to hinder the inevitable emergence of a strong Algeria, a state of law and true democracy, where law, integrity, and competence would prevail over tyranny, bribery, and poor performance — he said that the Algerian people knew how to rise to the challenge on 16 November 1995 [date of the presidential elections] because there were men and women at the top and the base who proved by their patriotism and readiness to sacrifice that Algeria was capable of achieving victory.

He stressed that their vote for and election of Liamine Zeroual as president was a vote for the ideals and principles of November 1954, for a transparent break with the past, for national cohesion, and democracy under peace and compassion.

The head of government said the difficulties and obstacles faced by the government in carrying out its planned policy were more than expected. However, by the grace of God and the effective help of the president, the devotion of the ministers and officials, and the help and understanding of social and economic partners, the government was able to achieve a significant part of the social and economic aims outlined in the government policy.

The head of government said that our homeland had enormous resources that were just waiting for ideas, manpower, and capital, and for the millions of young people who were waiting for employment, housing, or a visa to go abroad. Regarding the last category of those young people, the head of government said that he wanted to tell the young people who were asking for a visa to go abroad that they had a visa in their country, Algeria, and that the state would help all those who helped themselves.

After the head of government, the ministers of interior, finance, and labor and social protection addressed the meeting to give an account of the activities of their sectors.

The evening session will be allocated to interventions by the governors.

Zeroual: Consolidate State Credibility

LD2412160395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Liamine Zeroual presided over a meeting between the government and provincial governors today.

On his arrival at the Palais des Nations [conference hall], Club de Pin, the president was welcomed by the chairman of the Transitional National Council, Abdelkader Bensalah, and the prime minister, Mokdad Sifi.

In an address to the participants, President Liamine Zeroual said that the primary and constant aim was to consolidate the state. He focused on the need for everyone to respect the law under all circumstances.

[Unidentified Correspondent] The government's two-day meeting with provincial governors ended at about noon today.

The final session was distinguished by the presence of President Liamine Zeroual, who delivered a speech on the occasion. He began by greeting all state officials who had been performing their duties with integrity and devotion to serve the supreme interests of the homeland.

In his speech, the president said that it was thanks to the state employees and officials that everyone agreed now that Algeria had made significant achievements. It was through their sincere efforts in the field that trust between citizens and the administration had been restored.

The president also expressed his satisfaction with the achievements made in the field as a result of the sincere efforts of state officials.

The president said that remnants of terrorist violence had somehow hindered some development project. However, the uprooting of the crisis which we were experiencing required first and foremost that the issues experienced by citizens were really dealt with, and that lessons were learnt about the causes of the crisis.

In his speech, the president urged the governors to exercise their authority firmly in the spheres of control, follow-up and delivery, and to combat all the phenomena that undermine the reputation of the administration, such as negligence of duties towards citizens and hinderance of development projects. In this context, Liamine Zeroual said:

[Begin Zeroual recording] Stoppage and negligence at plants and the absence of officials from their appointed posts are phenomena which must finally disappear. In line with that, the local communities must demonstrate vitality in showing initiative, encouraging creativity and attracting investment. Sometimes, there may be substantial local resources that are neglected, insufficiently exploited or exposed to hinderances. Dealing with all these shortcomings will contribute towards improving living conditions at the local level, and creating major opportunities for employment, particularly for young people. [end recording]

[Correspondent] In his speech, the president stressed that the local communities were the spearhead of the state in bringing about the required mobilization to emerge from the crisis. He urged the local communities to leave their doors open to citizens to consolidate the state's credibility and everyone's respect for the law.

Sifi Points Out Government's Successes

LD2612175795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1221 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Speech by Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi to the Transitional National Council on 26 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God the merciful and most compassionate. May God's peace and prayers be upon the most noble of messengers [Prophet Mohamad].

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Transitional National Council, ladies and gentlemen, members of the government, ladies and gentlemen, peace and the mercy of God Almighty be upon you.

I was honored on 7 August 1994, four months after my appointment as prime minister, to present the government's program before this honorable council. It was a program for a transitional period and for a transitional government. [passage omitted]

This goal had been achieved on 16 November 1995 when millions of Algerians rushed to the polling offices to elect for the first time, freely and democratically, a president for the republic from among four candidates, and they chose Liamine Zeroual, the man who had courage and far-sightedness to seek arbitration from the sovereign people.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I would be the happiest man in the world if I succeeded today in presenting the outcome of our program without the shadows of terrorism hovering over our country, because what is the value of development and economic growth if our sons' blood continues to flow? What is the value of our socio-economic achievements if the bloody savagery continues to mow down our thinkers, journalists, cadres and citizens, and plant terror, fear, sadness and grief in our homes? [passage omitted]

The heroic people of Algeria mobilized themselves, despite the sacrifices, around President Zeroual's call for a national vote, and arrived at the 16 November date with determination and hope. This date, which should be a start for a new era, escaped many politicians. These politicians have a historical responsibility for the crisis in which we are living, and do not want to undertake their moral responsibility and contribute towards stopping the hemorrhage of Algerians' blood

Those men who called for the resumption of the electoral process in the end called for boycotting it. Those are the men who describe as political violence the booby-trapped cars which tear to pieces the bodies of young children. Those are the men who pray to God

Almighty, on one hand, and order the slaughter of His believers, on the other.

If it is possible to grant mercy to the Algerian youths who are misled into terrorism and who repent, what kind of mercy can they expect from God and their people? These educated, mature men who bless sedition and crime in order to reach power. What mercy for those who have not stopped accepting what cannot be justified and justifying what cannot be accepted. What mercy for those whose hearts have remained locked before the weeping of widows, bereft mothers and the tears of orphans. What mercy for those who have no mercy on their people and the sons of their people. It is time for them to repent because repentance is better than apostasy and the punishment of the hereafter. All political powers and all politicians must take advantage of the opportunity of the resumption of the election path to return to dialogue and consultation without which we cannot succeed in giving luck back to our people and our country. To these political powers and those politicians whom I have called upon before from this rostrum, I said: you are calling for dialogue. Come and hold dialogue. You call for elections. Come and help us organize them. You want power. Come and ask the people for it democratically through the polls in an atmosphere of peace and stability. This call, Mr. Speaker, is still valid. [passage omitted]

On the basis of the report which has been distributed to you, I would like to mention some figures and stress some achievements:

Easing external financial pressures has constituted our main aim to boost and develop the economy. Our agreed three-year plan enabled Algeria to reschedule $15 billion in debt from foreign financing. This was prepared in close coordination with all the economic and social partners and approved by the International Monetary Fund. Because of this, debt servicing dropped from 68 percent in 1993 to 43 percent in 1995. The currency reserves have been consolidated. The normal pressures on the national production resources related to supply with raw and semi-manufactured materials and spare parts have been eased. The citizen's basic needs are better met. Large-scale investment and construction programs have been launched.

Stabilizing the value of the dinar. The money supply has been reduced from 21.6 percent in 1993 to 13 percent in 1995. Inflation has been controlled in a more efficient way. The total deficit of the treasury, as far as the gross national product, moved from minus 9 percent in 1993 to minus 1.5 percent in 1995. We have moved from a negative growth rate estimated at 3.7 percent in 1993 to a positive growth rate estimated at 5 percent in 1995. This growth rate results from the expected growth rates of the various sectors based on the real payments registered in September 1995. This is the first time in 10 years that the Algerian production registers growth for every inhabitant. [passage omitted]

The agricultural sector achieved 21 percent estimated growth in 1995, after a drop in growth for two consecutive years, creating more than 90,000 jobs.

The industrial production has witnessed a real revival which emerges particularly through the exports of goods other than hydrocarbons which have increased from $300 million in 1994 to nearly $500 million in 1995 and are to reach, according to forecasts, $750 million in 1996. [passage omitted]

The total number of new jobs which were created in 1995, according to the latest results given by governors of provinces, has reached 600,000 in all sectors including 450,000 permanent positions. [passage omitted]

Our cultural heritage says "work for your present life as if you were to live forever and work for your after-life as if you were going to die tomorrow." This government has applied this in the philosophy of its work. We have worked for the long-term but we are aware that our mission could come to an end at any moment. I hope that judgement on our course of action will take into consideration these circumstances and will be able to highlight the link between what has been sowed and what will be reaped. [passage omitted]

Sonatrach, BP Sign $3-Billion Gas Contract

LD2312164495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sonatrach and British Petroleum [BP] today signed a partnership contract in Hassi Messaoud to exploit a gas field in In Salah. Industry and Energy Minister Amar Makhloufi, who attended the signing ceremony, is due to conclude a two-day visit to the region today.

The agreement provides for the prospecting, exploiting, transporting, and marketing of gas over a period of 30 years with an investment estimated at $3 billion. [passage omitted]

Security Forces Reportedly Kill 10 'Armed People'

LD2712113695 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1100 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Algerian French-language newspaper LA TRIBUNE said today that the Algerian security forces have killed 10 armed people in clashes between the security forces and armed people in the capital, Algiers. The newspaper added that a booby-trapped car exploded the day before yesterday [25 December] in Tizi Ouzou, 90 km to the east of the Algerian capital, leaving one person dead and wounding eight others.

Egypt

Mubarak Receives Qatari Foreign Minister Al Thani

NC2712085195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani at the Presidential Office today.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; 'Abd-al-Rahman al-'Atiyah, official at the Qatari Foreign Ministry with the rank of ambassador; and the Qatari ambassador to Cairo also attended the meeting.

Al Thani on Issues Discussed

NC2712122695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1005 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Dec (MENA)—Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani has announced that his country will not withdraw from or boycott the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], noting that the GCC member states are bound together by close relations. He added that his country does not wish to escalate its dispute with the GCC and would like to solve the problem in a brotherly context, in the same way such problems are usually solved within this organization.

The Qatari foreign minister, speaking after his meeting with President Husni Mubarak today, reported that he conveyed to Mubarak greetings from Qatari Amir Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani and that they discussed issues of mutual interest, topics connected with the work of the two countries' joint committee, and recent developments of interest to the Arab nation.

The Qatari minister said he explained his country's position on the selection of a GCC secretary general to President Mubarak.

Asked if his current regional tour is linked with a concurrent tour by the former amir of Qatar, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, the Qatari foreign minister answered: No. My tour is designed to explain our position on events at the Muscat GCC summit. It has nothing to do with the former amir's tour. The former amir is free to travel about and we hope his tour will include his own country, Qatar. We welcome him any time.

Asked to state Qatar's position on current proposals regarding Iraq's future and how to solve the Iraqi crisis, Shaykh Hamad said: Concerning Iraq, Qatar's position is clear. We support international legitimacy and UN Security Council resolutions. Iraq must comply with these resolutions.

He added: There is another aspect to the issue, the humanitarian aspect, which links us, as Arabs, to Iraq and the hunger and disease the Iraqi people are suffering. We are dealing with this aspect of the issue as a humanitarian affair but at the same time we will not defy the international community. We sympathize with the Iraqi people's ordeal and hope it will end. We hope Iraq will show more responsiveness to help end the crisis.

Asked about Qatari-Israeli cooperation and its prospects, especially in the sphere of natural gas, the Qatari foreign minister said his country subscribes to the freemarket system and pursues its own interests while refraining from harming fraternal Arab countries or any neighboring regional state.

He said: We always carefully assess our projects. If the assessment is positive, we have no objection to cooperation with the Israelis. Right now we have limited cooperation with them, pending the outcome of the negotiations on the Syrian-Lebanese track.

He explained that Qatar and the Israelis have discussed cooperation in the energy sphere. Adding that the Israelis proposed other fields of cooperation, he said: We have not responded to that yet.

Asked if the other Gulf countries were giving Qatar's former ruler, Shaykh Khalifah, a particularly high-level welcome in view of the recent dispute with Qatar at the Muscat GCC summit, the Qatari foreign minister replied: I will answer frankly. This may be partly true but we do not really believe that treating Qatar in this way because of a dispute will affect us. It has not affected us so far. Conditions in Qatar are very stable. Shaykh Khalifah's tours have no adverse effect on us. We hope his tours succeed and hope he will decide to take a rest from touring and make a decision on how he can return to his country, Qatar.

Asked if these disputes will harm the GCC, he said: I do not call them disputes. We are talking about legal points. In any bloc, like the EU for example, there are points over which the members disagree. This does not mean there is a problem or a crisis. It only means there are legal points that must be resolved in a legal or fraternal framework. Qatar is keeping every door open to a solution. We do not consider that what happened was a crisis.

About the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict, he said: Qatar's position is this: We accept no assault on any Arab country. We hope the two countries will resolve this issue peacefully. The world must understand that the Arab countries will not accept any attack on any one of them, regardless of the disagreements among Arab countries.

Regarding prospects for the Qatari-Bahraini dispute, the Qatari foreign minister said: The International Court of Justice will decide the future of this dispute.

Musa on Damascus Meeting, Yemen-Eritrea Dispute

NC2712112895 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1035 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the Damascus Declaration signatories meeting, due to open in Damascus later today, will discuss a document on cooperation that involves political, economic, and security elements of coordination as well as the signatories' ties with the Arab League.

He pointed out that Egypt submitted the document and it will be put up for approval during the meeting.

Musa told correspondents today that the meeting will involve general consultations on the situation in the Arab homeland and the Gulf region, as well as support for the Arab League and the peace process. He remarked that this kind of consultation among the eight countries is very useful.

Musa said the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute could be discussed during the meeting but as part of a discussion of the general situation in the region.

Asked whether Egypt has received a Yemeni request to send observers to the island of Hanish, Musa said that Egypt is continuing its contacts with both Yemen and Eritrea to contain the crisis. He said that Yemen is a fraternal Arab state and Eritrea is a fraternal African state and that Egypt is linked with both by strong ties. The two countries themselves are linked by strong ties. Any escalation must be stopped through negotiations and understanding between them, he said, adding: This naturally starts with a cease-fire, an exchange of POW's, and an agreement on a practical way to settle the dispute.

The foreign minister added that Egypt is talking to both sides on the basis of a clear initiative. There is also African mediation and things will depend on where and how we begin. Observers and other issues can then be discussed, he said.

Asked if Egypt was prepared to a request from observers, Musa replied: We have not reached that stage yet.

Parliament Speaker on Lawsuits, Opposition, Press

NC2712124595 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1100 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Dec (MENA)—People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur has stressed that the new assembly can only be dissolved through a public referendum.

Responding to a question in an interview with the weekly magazine AL-MUSAWWAR to be published Friday, 29 December, on the opposition's expectation of the dissolution of the assembly, he replied that constitutional precedents have shown that this dissolution can happen in only three cases. The precedents were the dissolution of the assembly in 1971, when the country shifted to constitutional legitimacy following revolutionary legitimacy; the establishment of the political platforms system in the framework of the socialist Union, which enabled the assembly to reflect numerous political views; and when the Supreme Constitutional Court ruled that the law on which the People's Assembly as formed was unconstitutional.

Replying to a question on protests by opposition powers, Dr. Surur said that the call to dissolve the assembly is a result of the numerous lawsuits that contested the elections on political or constitutional bases. He explained that these concern some assembly members and not the assembly as a whole. Moreover, he added, what counts is the validity of the appeals and the decision to be taken on them by the competent authority, in this case the People's Assembly, after verification by the Court of Cassation. He further said that it is not possible to determine the fate of an establishment on the basis of allegations or appeals emanating from an individual or party's political view.

The following question was posed to the People's Assembly speaker: Being master of its own decisions, will the People's Assembly accept the rulings of the Court of Cassation and will the government compensate the affected candidates? He replied: This question assumes that the appeals are valid and we cannot jump ahead of events. The appeals have not been settled yet and I do not want to answer a question that makes unwarranted assumptions and speculations.

Asked whether the new People's Assembly in its present form can realize aspirations in the 21st century, Dr. Surur said that the assembly was formed in the wake of an important phase in the economic reform process and the consolidation of democracy. The elections were held in light of people's hopes, he said. Hence, he added, the new assembly in its current form clearly expresses the people's ambitions for the future.

Dr. Surur was asked to comment on the conduct of independent candidates who rushed to join the National Democratic Party immediately after winning the elections. He was asked whether it was not better for them to represent a neutral current within the assembly, that sides with no specific power, to maintain the stand they proported during the electoral process. Dr. Surur pointed out that the National Democratic Party openly announced that no decision has been made as yet to accept applications for membership submitted by independent MP's. Why should we jump to conclusions, he asked.

The People's Assembly speaker was asked whether the overwhelming National Democratic Party majority in the assembly will dominate the body and hence diminish the role of the opposition. He replied: Nobody ever said that. Views are for all and the decision is for the majority. The small numbers of the opposition will not deny them the right to exercise its role freely and express its views. It is quality not quantity that counts, he said.

Commenting on the extravagance of some candidates during the electoral campaigns, Dr. Surur said: There are many examples of candidates who spent lavishly on campaigning to buy votes and hire thugs and then failed in the elections. Their failure echoed widely, he said.

Surur was asked whether the new assembly will adopt the new press law that will be referred to it in a few days and whether it will suggest a compromise between the version the Press Association sent to the assembly and the other law the Supreme Press Council developed. He replied: The People's Assembly will only consider the draft law referred to it through constitutional channels and according to regulations. It can either be referred by the government and, in this case, it will be referred directly to the specialized committee or by the MP's, to be referred to the suggestions and complaints committee to consider its referral to the specialized committee.

95 Muslim Brother Detainees Released

NC2612205695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1710 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Dec (MENA)—Counselor Hisham Saraya, public attorney at the Higher State Security Prosecution, has decided to release 95 defendants who belong to the banned Muslim Brotherhood [MB]. They carried out riots during the People's Assembly elections. Interrogations showed that these defendants were told by the MB candidates to stand in front of the election committee centers. They fabricated quarrels with the candidates and their representatives. The interrogations also showed that they provoked policemen and tried to instigate the masses to commit acts of violence and riots and stage demonstrations to block traffic.

Paper Links Peace to Israel's Nuclear Program

NC2712074595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Dec (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM asserts that Egypt and the other Arabs will never abandon their right to clear the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction because it is a matter of life and death.

In an editorial today, the paper declares that Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's recent statement that comprehensive peace in the region is linked to a discussion of Israel's nuclear program demonstrates Egypt's great concern for a safe future for Arabs. It notes that Musa's strong position urges that any meeting of the Multilateral Negotiations Arms Reduction Committee should discuss the Israeli nuclear program in addition to the other issues on its agenda.

The paper says that the position expressed by 'Amr Musa is a firm Egyptian position that does not hinder or belittle the peace process but is indeed a basic component of peace and an indispensable factor of coexistence in a region that has known more than half a century of conflict.

AL-AHRAM explains that no one can imagine peace among two countries when one possesses weapons of mass destruction while the other does not.

The paper wonders if intentions can be mutually sincere while this tremendous and fearful threat remains. It asks if cooperation is possible when coexistence itself is based on such shaky ground.

Sudan

Al-Bashir Receives Yemeni Envoy, Message

JN2612184895 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, the president of Sudan, received in Khartoum today 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ansi, the Yemeni president's adviser and envoy, who delivered a message to him from Lt. Gen. President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. The message deals with the situation and developments as a result of the wicked Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island al-Hanish al-Kabir.

The Sudanese president expressed Sudan's satisfaction with Yemen's stand aimed at solving the problem through peaceful means. At the same time, he condemned the Eritrean aggression and called for restoring things to the way they were before 15 December.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Ghazi Salah-al-Din, Sudanese minister of state for foreign affairs; and Brigadier Gen. Bakri Hakam Salih, the minister of interior. It was also attended by Muhammad Ahmad al-Ra'di, Yemen's ambassador to Sudan.

Equatoria Military Official Discusses Rebellion

EA2612214295 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The deputy commander of Equatoria military zone, staff Brigadier al-Abbas 'Abd-al-Rahim al-Khalifah, has stressed that our Armed Forces, supported by the People's Defense Forces and the Sudanese people, will completely rout out the remaining pockets of rebellion.

He said that despite the huge support the rebellion received from foreign quarters during its recent aggression, the Armed Forces were able to foil that work and inflict heavy losses on the enemy in lives and equipment. He added that the huge moral and material support that all sectors of the Sudanese people gave to the Mujahid food convoys, had proved the unity of the nation and of its internal front, which, he stressed, was the real victory of the nation over its enemies. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Mauritanian Official Condemns Iraq's Intentions

LD2612164295 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1400 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 26 Dec (KUNA)—A senior Mauritanian official stressed that the Mauritanian media had launched a counter campaign to reveal the "malicious" intentions of the Iraqi regime which, together with its supporters, it had practiced in his country.

The official, Ahmed El Banaou, who is the press adviser to the Mauritanian president and director of television, said in an open debate held at the headquarters of the Kuwaiti correspondents' association that the radical changes in the Mauritanian political position toward the Iraqi regime required the purging of the information and government apparatus from Ba'this influence loyal to Iraq, such as the television apparatus that was financed by the government of the Iraqi regime and some newspapers.

He attributed the deterioration of the Mauritanian political stance toward the issue of Kuwait after the unjust Iraqi invasion to the control of the Ba'this influence over the Mauritanian street, which had been mobilized over more than 18 years to support Iraq "aggressor or aggressed."

He pointed out that Kuwait, as a donor state, had endeavored for a long time to establish charity, development, health, educational, agricultural projects, etc. in Mauritania proceeding from sublime humanitarian goals and principles in contrast with Iraq whose projects endeavored to "ideologize Mauritanian minds through controlling the sensitive positions."

He revealed the recent Iraqi involvement in the attempt to overthrow the regime in Mauritania after it consolidated its presence not only in the media apparatus, but in all the party institutions that had been set up along a Ba'thist system, in addition to the loyalty of a number of officers in the Mauritanian Army to that regime. [passage omitted]

He pointed out that the new Mauritanian Government's orientation was heading for correcting past mistakes and supporting the just Kuwaiti cause through the development of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, pointing to the depth of the historical and fraternal relations between the two peoples.

He said that his visit to Kuwait was fruitful, during which the new Mauritanian position had been clarified, and also preparations for future projects aimed at development information cooperation, including television, newspapers, etc., between the two countries had been discussed.

Assembly Agrees To Sign UN Law Against Torture

LD2612181195 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1623 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 26 December—The National Assembly today approved a draft law put forward by the government which would allow Kuwait to sign the agreement against torture and other forms of harsh, inhuman and humiliating treatment. All the deputies present voted in favor of the agreement which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1984 and which urged the states to oppose and ban torture and its use against the citizens of all states [as received]. [passage omitted]

The explanatory note to the draft law stressed that the state of Kuwait was at the forefront of the states which opposed and banned torture since this position was enshrined in Article 31 of its Constitution which stipulated that "nobody will be subjected to torture or any degrading treatment." Furthermore, Article 34 of the Kuwaiti Constitution stipulates that "no defendant should be harmed physically or morally."

The Foreign Ministry had already recommended that Kuwait sign this agreement while expressing some reservations about it. These reservations concern the prerogatives given to the antitorture committee which checks the implementation of the agreement after receiving complaints about any violations. The reservations also concern the measures used to resolve a dispute which might arise among states as a result of the interpretation and implementation of this agreement [as received].

Yemen, Eritrea Urged To Resolve Conflict

LD2612171895 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1553 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 26 Dec—The State of Kuwait has today appealed to Yemen and Eritrea to give a chance to the good efforts exerted by fraternal countries to resolve the conflict between them over the disputed Greater Hanish island.

A responsible source at the Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a press statement after the meeting here between the Yemeni president's adviser, Muhammad Basindwah, and the first deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, that the State of Kuwait "wishes that the two fraternal countries embark on the course of dialogue and not resort to the use of military force to resolve the differences" between them.

The source said that "at the same time" Kuwait "appeals to the two fraternal countries to give a complete chance to the good endeavors represented by the good efforts exerted by the sisterly countries for establishing security and stability in this vital region of the world." [passage omitted]

Oman

Palestinian Leader 'Arafat Arrives on Visit

Part of Gulf Tour

JN2612131695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Dec 95

[From the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat will hold talks with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman in Muscat today. The talks will deal with relations between the two countries and the latest developments of the Middle East peace process.

President 'Arafat arrived, in God's care, in Oman this morning as part of his efforts to enhance Arab solidarity.

It is noteworthy that President 'Arafat visited the United Arab Emirates and Qatar last week. He held talks there which were described as positive and constructive.

Meets With Sultan Qabus

JN2612163595 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, may God protect him, received His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, and the accompanying delegation at al-Barakah House today.

His majesty the sultan and his excellency the Palestinian president discussed bilateral relations and Palestinian developments. They also discussed the Middle East peace process, Arab and international developments, and matters of mutual concern.

Accord To Open Legation Offices

JN2612212795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat held talks with his brother Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman in Muscat today. The two sides agreed to open an Omani legation office to the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and a Palestinian legation office to the Omani Government in Muscat, and to form a joint committee to reinforce fields of cooperation. Talks between President Yasir 'Arafat and Sultan Qabus dealt with latest developments in the peace process and Oman's support for the Palestinian people in light of the Palestinian Authority taking over of many Palestinian cities and areas.

President 'Arafat arrived in Muscat this morning on a visit that will last two days. It is his second visit since the 1990 Gulf war.

'Arafat Concludes Visit

JN2712123695 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, and his accompanying delegation left the country this morning after a two-day visit to the Sultanate, during which he met with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id. His Highness Shaykh Fahd Bin-Mahmud Al Sa'id, deputy prime minister for cabinet affairs, led those who saw 'Arafat off. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Yemeni Envoy Arrives in Doha, Makes Statement

JN2312153395 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1240 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Doha, 23 Dec (WAKH)—Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Anisi arrived in Doha today. On arrival, al-Anisi said that he is carrying a message to Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the amir of Qatar, from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

In statements to reporters, he added he will brief Qatari officials on the latest developments in the Yemeni arena and will consult with them on all Arab and international issues. In his statements published by the Qatari News Agency, he said that his country does not, in general, reject any mediation to solve this issue through peaceful avenues rather than the other option.

Asked about the Eritrean president's proposal to refer the case to international arbitration, he said that arbitration represents an evasion. The case as it relates to the island is that of an a aggression, an occupation by force, and a betrayal. He added: Our opinion regarding the island is clear. The island must be evacuated, things must be restored to normal, detainees must be released. Eritrea must apologize for what happened. He said that these are not conditions as the Eritrean president considers them. It is a matter of restoring things to what they were before the wicked aggression.

Saudi Arabia

Crew Overpowers Ethiopian Hijacking Airliner

NC2612204695 Paris AFP in English
1801 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Dec 26 (AFP) — An Ethiopian man who attempted to hijack a Saudi airliner on Tuesday [26 December] that had taken off from Asmara for Addis Ababa was overpowered by the plane's crew, airline officials said.

The hijack attempt occurred at 7:OO a.m. (0400 GMT), about ten minutes after the plane had left the Eritrean capital headed for Addis Ababa, with 183 passengers on board, Saudia airline said in a statement.

Nabl Mohammad Amin entered the plane's cockpit armed with a knife. He was overpowered by the crew, and the plane, which links Jeddah in eastern Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa, returned to Asmara and turned the man over to authorities, the airline said.

Newspaper Criticizies Eritrean Use of Force

LD2712083995 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
0640 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 27 Dec — Today's Saudi newspapers appeared carrying the following main headlines: [passage omitted]

AL-BILAD newspaper, under the headline "The Law of Force, or the Force of the Law," says: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's expression of extreme concern over Eritrea's use of military force in occupying Hanish islands, which belonged to the Arab Republic of Yemen, proceeded from its political course rejecting the use of force for resolving conflicts between countries without resorting to a cordial, rational dialogue and without pursuing all means through legitimate channels to end those conflicts.

It referred to the Council of Ministers' emphasis in its session the day before yesterday under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does not support the use of military force to resolve differences and prefers reason, logic, and constructive dialogue in dealing with such issues in order to guarantee security and stability.

It pointed out that it is regrettable for the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni Hanish islands to come at a time when the Middle East region was heading for the prospects of a future in which the reality of peace replaced the logic of wars and conflicts... It was also regrettable that Eritrea has abandoned all options of a cordial dialogue with its neighbors, preferring the option of military action, which can only lead to more conflicts and to more tense atmospheres which will cloud the skies of the whole region.

The newspaper called on the two countries to work toward ending the existing conflict between them by cordial, practical means based on a quiet, balanced dialogue which will provide the necessary seriousness in the pursuit of permanent solutions. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Experimental TV Satellite Transmission Started

JN2412111395 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1005 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 24 Dec (INA)—Yemen on 21 December started experimental transmission from its satellite station on Intersat [name of satellite as received].

The director of the Yemeni television sector said the ground station for television transmission via satellite is now 95 percent complete. The transmission will cover remote areas of Yemen which do not receive terrestrial television transmission.

He said the transmission will cover the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf. He noted that a special studio for satellite transmission has been set up, and that this studio is equipped with very modern engineering equipment and machines.

Saddam's Son, Wife Reportedly Fail Escape Attempt

NC2612152895 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A report is being circulated among the citizens of Baghdad that the security authorities of the tyrant Saddam Husayn have foiled an attempt by the criminal 'Udayy Saddam Husayn and his mother Sajidah Khayrallah Talfah to flee to Jordan.

Our sources cite informed persons as saying that 'Udayy's attempt to escape with his mother Sajidah occurred in the wake of clashes at the end of October between his bodyguards and the bodyguards of his criminal father, Saddam.

The sources added that the motorcade of 'Udayy and his mother passed through police checkpoints in Baghdad and al-Ramadi but was stopped at the (al-Tarabil) border area between Iraq and Jordan. After the defection of Husayn Kamil and his companions in August 1995, this border checkpoint was given extensive powers to stop any traveler regardless of his official stature. It gets its instructions directly from the tyrant Saddam.

The circumstances surrounding this issue are a mystery, especially as the regime has imposed a news blackout on the entire affair.

Government Troops Kill Citizens Fleeing to Syria

NC2612160295 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The regime's forces killed 12 citizens in the (Rabi'ah) area in Mosul Governorate while they were attempting to flee to Syria last month. Our sources said that a border patrol opened fire on a group of citizens, which included some women and children, while they were trying to cross the border into Syria at night to escape the tragic economic, security, and political conditions in Iraq.

The sources added that the regime's forces transported the victims' bodies to Mosul. Eyewitnesses observed that some of the bodies were those of women and children.

Our sources have not yet succeeded in identifying the victims although there is some suspicion that some of them were military personnel.

Army Officers Sent From Baghdad; Fear of Coup

NC2612161495 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] People coming to Europe from Iraq this week said that Saddam Husayn had sent senior Iraqi Army officers with the rank of brigadier general and above away from Baghdad. He gave them assignments in the northern and southern regions and cut short the leave they spent with their families in Baghdad.

In remarks to our radio, the travelers noted that the measure even included administrative officers not belonging to any combat units. He noted that the residences of the officers' families, including those located in al-Qahirah district near al-Bakr Military University, are like closed military barracks, where people going in and coming out of them are questioned, allegedly to provide adequate protection to the families.

These measures, according to the travelers, are attributed to the regime's fear of a military coup against it.

Regime Doubles Travel Fee, Jams Radios

NC2712064795 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tyrant Saddam Husayn's regime has increased travel fees for Iraqis from 200,000 to 400,000 Iraqi dinars. In addition, renewal of a passport costs 50,000 dinars, not to mention other related charges. This makes the travel tax amount to approximately 500,000 Iraqi dinars.

The increase in fees is the second measure adopted by the Baghdad regime in less than a week to curtail the travel of Iraqis. Earlier, the regime cut the validity time for a travel permit from one year to one month.

It is worth noting that half a million Iraqi dinars is an exorbitant amount of money for most Iraqis, who are short of cash, unemployed, and suffer from the high price of food and medicine. The measure is tantamount to a ban on Iraqis' travel abroad without explicitly announcing it.

A week ago, tyrant Saddam Husayn's regime cut direct telephone calls coming from abroad. The measure sought to prevent news about Iraq from leaking abroad, particularly following reports about a possible meeting of the Iraqi opposition in the Jordanian capital. The regime also increased jamming on Arab and foreign radios, making them more difficult to hear in Iraq than before. The measure sought to impose a media blackout and prevent Iraqis from listening to news about political developments related to their country.

Opposition Member Explains Federation Proposal

JN2512115095 Irbid AL-HIWAR in Arabic 25 Dec 95 p 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] It is an opposition that cannot run a city. This is the description given by

U.S. Administration officials to the London-based Iraqi opposition.

Despite this, regional wagering on this opposition is gradually and rapidly growing since the defection to Jordan by General Husayn Kamil, son-in-law of Saddam Husayn, and after the Jordanian leadership launched its initiative-dubbed the Jordanian initiative by the international press—to reach a reconciliation between the Iraqi opposition factions. Amman will host the opposition factions at a conference expected to be held next January.

Jordan believes that the ideal formula to end the Iraqi crisis is through dividing Iraq into three federal areas linked by a central government in Baghdad.

Jordanian political circles are trying to market this reconciliation between the Iraqi opposition factions as a reconciliation between the Iraqi people's groups, although Jordanian officials have earlier said that Jordan has no specific plans concerning the situation in Iraq, and that the Jordanian objective focuses on one thing: ending the suffering of the Iraqi people that has been going on for past five years.

Dr. Nabil al-Janabi, who is an Iraqi opposition member close to Jordan, said that the convening of the reconciliation conference is to agree on a federal formula according to which Iraq can be divided into the following:

1. Al-Basrah state [wilayah], comprising al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, al-Nasiryah, and al-Samawah.
2. The central Euphrates state, comprising al-Diwaniyah, al-Najaf, Karbala', and al-Hillah Governorates.
3. Baghdad state, comprising Baghdad, Diyalah, al-Ramadi, and al-Kut.
4. Mosul state, comprising Mosul, Tikrit, and Karkuk. Karkuk will have a special status because of its Turkmen minority.
5. Kurdistan state, comprising al-Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Irbil, the capital of the state.

Al-Janabi said Jordan will support this proposal in the event that it is endorsed by all factions of the Iraqi opposition. [passage omitted]

SAIRI Comments on King Husayn's Comments

JN2612214995 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Report by Ahamd al-'Ani]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Bayan Jabr, representative of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] in Damascus, said on Saturday [23 December] that the Iraqi opposition is divided into three streams regarding King Husayn's call to hold a meeting for the Iraqi opposition in Amman. Brother Bayan Jabr said SAIRI, which is chaired by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, is suspicious, and considers the Jordanian king's statements unclear and obscure. Jabr added: We still think the Jordanian proposition is engulfed in ambiguity and obscurity, and our fears of the divisionist language which the king used still persist. He pointed out that the national conference has reached a dead end.

In stating their position on the Jordanian proposition, responsible Iraqi Islamic sources said this proposition is not much different from previous projects. The Iraqi Islamists, the sources added, have announced that they support any project that adopts unconditionally, in word and deed, a practical, national, and independent Iraqi program to topple the Saddamist regime and find an alternative acceptable to the Iraqi people in a unified, coherent, and independent Iraq. The Islamic stream insists on adopting this legitimate program. Moreover, effective and serious national action will always be the first and last condition put forward by the Islamic streams concerning adopting or abandoning any project whether in the past or in the future.

The Iraqi Islamists, and due to the sensitivity of the Iraqi issue as well as the direct and indirect impact it has on the regional and international levels, are not in a position to respond to any initiative that has to do with Iraqi affairs and that aims at canceling or excluding this or that party, because this will lead to future problems for Iraq and the entire region.

Islamic al-Da'wah Party To Launch Radio Station

JN2612210295 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The central information unit of the Islamic al-Da'wah Party [hizb al-da'wah al-islamiyah] has issued an announcement about a radio station broadcasting to the Iraqi people in the name of the Islamic Movement in Iraq. The announcement said that the station will be accurate and objective in disseminating news and information and will explain the suffering and jihad of the Iraqi people.

The announcement noted that the cultural programs will explain the Islamic thought and culture. As for the political programs, they will be dealing with and challenging the Saddamist obscurantism and propaganda which seeks to spread the defeatist spirit in the nation.

The announcement also gave other programs dealing with the Islamic world's news and events, spreading the news of actions by supporters and callers for Islam the world over.

The radio station will begin broadcasting on Wednesday, 5 of Sha'ban, 1416 of the hegira, corresponding to 27 December.

Peres Discusses Talks With Syria, Nuclear Issue

'High Expectations' for Talks

TA2612130995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said today that he has high expectations about the negotiations with Syria and that he is pleased with the new tone coming from Damascus, a tone that had never been heard before. Mr. Peres stressed that Israel will conduct serious negotiations with Syria because it wants to establish a peace that is satisfactory to both sides. He went on to say that Israel does not want either land or water from Lebanon, and that an independent and balanced Lebanon would be the best neighbor.

Our correspondent Yo'av Ya'aqov reports that the prime minister made these remarks when he called on Archbishop Maximus Salum, leader of the Catholic community in Haifa, to convey his respects to the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1105 GMT on 26 December reports that Peres further told his hosts that "our intentions about peace with Syria and Lebanon are serious, and making peace is a long process." Referring to the Palestinian issue, the prime minister said: "It was Israel's decision, out of free and moral choice, to carry out the redeployment in the territories, which is being completed these days." He ended his remarks by telling the archbishop that "after peace is attained in the whole region the time will come to exorcise the evil spirit of war from the entire Middle East."]

On Nonconventional Arms

TA2612165895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said today that the pace of the negotiations with Syria has been very slow to date and that new and surprising solutions must be found. According to him, he proposed to summon all Arab leaders to the negotiating table in order to end the wars in the region after he realized that the Syrian president wanted the peace with Israel to be of substance. Peres called for imbuing the deliberations with content from their very beginning so as to take advantage of the momentum.

Addressing high school students in Haifa, Mr. Peres noted that Rabin and he himself had adopted unpopular decisions despite the calls of traitor and murderer because they knew that nobody else would do it for them.

He said that in his opinion his remarks on the nuclear issue had been blown out of proportion and unnecessary drama had evolved around them. We did not make any concessions and we did not change our positions, he stressed. His remarks were reported by our correspondent Haviva Roger.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1605 GMT on 26 December carries a recorded passage of Peres' remarks in which he says: "We have said it 1,001 times, that if a comprehensive Middle East peace is attained which includes Iran, Iraq, and Libya then we will enter discussions on how to turn the Middle East into a region free of nonconventional weapons — chemical, nuclear, and biological."

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 26 December carries a related report on Peres' address to students in Haifa. Asked by a student to explain what he said on the nuclear issue, Peres replies in a recorded passage: "Seeing that I had the privilege to be the man in charge of building the nuclear rector in Dimona 42 years ago — which was considered a major sin even then; many thought that either it could not or should not be done — I am entitled to look ahead and say what I did, if indeed there is a situation of comprehensive peace. I am not the only one saying that, the Likud also says as much. Therefore, there are no concessions here."]

Jerusalem 'Expectations,' Damascus 'Hopes' Viewed

TA2712110495 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 27 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "The Talks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem talks about "expectations," while Damascus speaks of "hopes." Meanwhile, in Washington, the Syrians have been going to great lengths to emphasize that "hopes" mean only their own. This would seem to be the reason for the low level of their delegation and their insistence on U.S. full participation in the talks, never mind that the United States long ago ceased being just a mediator. The Syrians estimate that the U.S. interest is more compatible with their hopes than with our expectations.

The prime minister speaks about new and surprising solutions, never mind that it will be mainly his own citizens who are going to be surprised by the news. It is hard to see how such surprises will suddenly crop up in two sessions of talks lasting three days each unless everything has been agreed on in advance, in which case we will really be the only ones who are surprised.

Having said that, a low level of expectations should be maintained. What will be a real surprise is if it turns out that the expectations hoped for in Washington land in our lap at some point in time that will compel Shim'on Peres to uphold Yitzhaq Rabin's promise to hold a referendum instead of blending it into the elections.

IDF: Palestinian Police Performance 'Grim'

TA2712115095 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 27 Dec 95 pp 1, 2

[Report by Nadav Ha'etzni]

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] document drafted by the DCO [District Liaison and Coordination Office] paints a grim picture of Palestinian officers and soldiers and their compliance with the Oslo agreements.

The document, drafted by the DCO in Hebron, claims that Palestinian policemen try to blackmail the IDF and operate as gangs, and that it is impossible to do any business with them.

The paper entitled "Who Is a Palestinian Policeman?" states: "There is no adherence to the official mission. Palestinian interests are given top priority. Policemen on joint patrols tend to favor Palestinians, even if their actions contravene the agreement they are supposed to uphold."

As for their commanders, the document says: "They tend to give inaccurate and unclear answers... they keep them vague to allow themselves a loophole... they portray themselves as poor little things for blackmail purposes... they expect to get something out of every meeting."

The IDF document goes on to say that "commanders are replaced because they are suspected of identifying with us... they tend to blame us for every incident... they operate as gangs... when there is a riot, for example, policemen join the mob... they still see us as a threat and as the enemy."

Another portion of the document includes suggestions to IDF officers and soldiers on how to behave with the Palestinian troops. Among other things, officers are told: "Convey the message to your soldiers that being the stronger side we can be magnanimous, while the Palestinians have nothing to lose."

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 27 December adds: "Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of the IDF troops in Judaea and Samaria, has confirmed that the IDF passed out a brochure instructing the soldiers on how to behave in dealing with Palestinian Police.

["Our settlement affairs correspondent Gil Litman obtained parts of the brochure, in which the Palestinian Police are ridiculed and criticized. Among other things, it says that the Palestinian policeman is not versed in the Oslo agreements, cannot read maps, and is trigger happy. The brochure adds that many Palestinian police are illiterate, often operate in gangs, and have short memories. The IDF document says that when an incident takes place, Palestinian Police officers must be dragged out of bed and forced to come to the scene, and that they often portray themselves as poor for blackmail purposes.

["Gen. Ofir stressed today that the brochure was written 10 months ago, and that the contacts between IDF troops and the Palestinian Police have since significantly improved and the ties between them are good and well organized."]

Ramallah Declared Closed Military Zone

TA2612154195 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A short time ago the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] declared the city of Ramallah a closed military zone and banned the entry of Israelis. This measure was taken in the wake of security warnings and as part of the preparations for the transfer of the city to the Palestinian Authority within the next 24 hours. Israeli vehicles will be rerouted to the Ramallah bypass road, which was inaugurated three hours ago.

Jewish Settlement Agency's Budget Increases 15%

TA2612065995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has approved a 15 percent increase in the budget of the Jewish Agency Settlement Department. Some 140 million shekels are earmarked for the development of the Golan Heights, Jordan Valley, and Dead Sea areas. Finance Minister Shohat also said he will approve an additional 15 million shekels for regional projects. The allocations are part of the government's overall development budget.

Over 100 Candidates Register for Likud Primaries

TA2712111295 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 27 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Major-General (reserves) Yitzhaq Mordekhay has decided to run in the Likud primary, but former prime minister Yitzhaq Shamir and MK [Knesset Member] Moshe Nisim have decided it is time to retire.

These are only a few of the developments which became apparent last night as the Likud list of primary candidates was finally closed.

In all, over 100 candidates paid the NIS [new Israeli shekel] 5,000 registration fee, of whom 28 are MKs. The primary is scheduled for March 26. [passage omitted]

Mordekhay was eagerly courted by a number of parties, especially Labor, but also by David Levi for his soon-to-be-born party. Throughout months of energetic rumor-mongering by the media, Mordekhay maintained a strict silence.

Earlier in the day, Shamir announced he would not seek another term in the Knesset. Noting that he is 80, he said, "The time has come to step down."

Shamir had planned to resign after losing the premiership in 1992, but reconsidered. He promised last night that he would "do my utmost during the campaign to help the Likud back to power. This government is bad for Israel and must be replaced." [passage omitted]

The rampant speculation in recent days about a surprise last-minute return to the party by MKs David Levi and David Magen was not borne out by last night's deadline. "All the talk of coming back was unfounded," said Magen.

But yesterday's deadline did bring a few surprises. Among them was the entry into the Likud fray of former Agudat Yisra'el MK Eli'ezer Mizrahi. While the Likud had moderately religious candidates, such as Nisim, it never had anyone as haredi [ultra-Orthodox] as Mizrahi. [passage omitted]

Among other familiar faces in the race will be former MK and former ambassador to Washington Zalman Shoval, former Tzomet MK Yo'ash Tzidon, 'Atid MK Ester Salmovitz (formerly of Tzomet and then YI'UD [Independent and Democratic Israel]) and former Tehiya MK Ge'ula Kohen. Kohen's forms were handed in by her son, MK Tzahi Hanegbi, also very much in the running.

One slot is reserved for new immigrant candidates and one for young activists. Among those seeking the immigrant vote will be Soviet aliya activist Yuliy Kosharovsky.

Cabinet Discusses Russian Mafia Activities

TA2412120395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The cabinet met today for a little less than three hours. Under the new format, the meeting was divided into three parts. One of the ministers told me that it reminded him of when he began his military service. The meeting did not discuss the negotiations with Syria. All the important issues — Israel's nuclear capability and the negotiations with Syria — did not come up. One of the ministers told me ironically: There are apparently no important political issues to discuss.

One issue of interest did come up and I believe it will make the headlines: the Russian mafia's activity in Israel. It has apparently invested $1.5 billion here. Some ministers tried to give it different proportions by claiming that according to Police Chief Asaf Hefetz, the mafia has smuggled some $30 billion out of Russia. That means they have not invested a great deal of their money in Israel. Two gatherings of Russian mafia leaders have apparently been held in Israel. I understand that Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal is going to hold a news conference to give us more information on that matter. [passage omitted]

Minister Shahal also investigated the report that the Greek Orthodox patriarch plans to convey the churches and institutions under his authority to Yasir 'Arafat. The deputy patriarch told Shahal's aide, Moshe Sason, that the report is false and a figment of the imagination. [passage omitted]

Shahal: Nation in Danger From Russian Mafia

TA2512112495 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 25 Dec 95 pp 1, 12

[Report by Raine Marcus]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The nation is in danger of being dominated by elements of the Russian mafia, who have taken over companies, bought property and attempted to control politicians, Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said at a press conference yesterday.

While Russian authorities said the mafia has invested $4 billion here, Shahal put the actual figures at about half that sum.

However, other sources said it was nearly impossible to estimate exact sums, since most mafia money is invested in companies and real estate, often through intermediaries.

Between 10 and 15 groups, belonging to different sections of the Russian mafia, are currently here, said Shahal, who confirmed that some of their leaders are trying to gain control of some politicians here, "just as has happened in the rest of the world."

The leaders invest in legitimate businesses and hold Israeli passports, "a passport much in demand, since it enables the holder to travel freely to most countries," he added.

However, he stressed that 99 percent of immigrants from the CIS are not involved in organized crime.

Currently, Israel has no laws to stop organized crime syndicates from investing laundered money here. However, Shahal said a law has been proposed banning the use of laundered money here.

Insp.-Gen. Asaf Hefetz confirmed that during the past year, three conferences of Russian mafia leaders were held here, one in Elat and the other two in five-star hotels in Tel Aviv.

The conferences, said Hefetz, were closely monitored by police, who gathered intelligence information, but "there was no need for arrests."

[A similar report in Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew by Ya'aqov Galenti on page 15 reports that "the police and the State Attorney's Office are examining the possibility of deporting some of the heads of the Russian mafia who have settled in Israel and started running their business from here."]

Nordex-Owner Grigory Luchansky Profiled

TA2612194795 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM REPORT in English 28 Dec 95 pp 20, 21, 22

[Article by Tom Sawicki: "Sinned Against or Sinning?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Last spring, a cargo plane en route from North Korea to Baghdad landed in Kiev to refuel. Ukrainian officials, apparently acting on a tip, boarded the aircraft and uncovered a consignment of Scud missile warheads.

The plane belonged to Nordex, a multibillion dollar international corporation controlled by Grigory Luchansky. Nordex is based in Vienna, and most of Luchansky's business is conducted in the former Soviet Union. But as of last year, Luchansky, 50, has been a citizen of Israel. And of the 600,000 or so former residents of the Soviet Union to have taken Israeli citizenship in the past five years, Luchansky is arguably the most controversial. While the Israeli law enforcement agencies are prepared to regard him, for now, as a legitimate businessman, insisting they have no firm evidence to the contrary, some Western intelligence agencies beg to differ. According to a string of recent reports in the European press, Luchansky is suspected of maintaining close connections with the Russian mafia, laundering KGB money, and involvement in the illicit trade in nuclear materials and technology. After months of long-distance telephone chasing, and several last-minute cancellations, the elusive Luchansky finally granted THE JERUSALEM REPORT an interview last month. Over lunch at a restaurant opposite his luxurious local residence, in Tel Aviv's opulent Opera Tower, he spoke proudly of Nordex's $3-billion annual turnover, and strenuously denied all allegations of wrongdoing and corruption. Of the Scud warheads discovery, he claimed that the Nordex plane in question had been chartered by a private firm, and that had he known it was to be used to transport such a cargo, he would never have agreed to the charter. "How could anyone think for a moment that I, an Israeli citizen, would work with my country's worst enemy?" he asked.

But for all Luchansky's forceful and plaintive assertions of innocence, the fact is that this kind of suspicious incident keeps on happening to Nordex and its employees. In the last few months alone, three Nordex employees have been shot in mafia-style street shootings; two of the incidents, in Moscow and Kiev, were fatal. A Ukraine-based company, Ukraintechservice, with which Nordex works closely, is currently under investigation over several allegedly shady deals. And in CIA reports on the global reach of the Russian mafia, says a former U.S. government official with close ties to the intelligence community, "the corporate name that keeps popping up with red lights flashing all over is Nordex."

This summer, Luchansky received an invitation to a select dinner, of some two dozen international Jewish businessmen, with President Clinton. "Dear Mr. Luchansky," read the letter from the Democratic National Committee in Washington." I cordially invite you to have dinner with President Clinton on Tuesday, July 11, 1995 at the Hay Adams Hotel in Washington, D.C." It was signed by DNC finance director Richard Sullivan.

Two years earlier, he had attended a similar event, spoken with Clinton at length, and even agreed to a request from the president to deliver a private message to the leader of Ukraine.

But this time, Luchansky had to turn the president down. Discreet inquiries had given him reason to believe he would not be allowed to enter the U.S. — or might even be arrested if he tried.

At the start of this year, traveling on his Israeli passport, he had been stopped at London's Heathrow Airport, interrogated for six hours by police, refused admission, and humiliatingly put on the next plane back to Vienna. His protests were met with threats of arrest. Hong Kong and Canada have also declared him persona non grata.

At present, therefore, Dr. Luchansky, as his business associates refer to him (he is "Garik" to friends), has a rather limited range of safe travel options. He can only use his executive jet with confidence between his headquarters in Austria (where he lives in Vienna's plush Heitzing district), various locations in the former Soviet Union, and Tel Aviv. Most of the problems appear to stem from a dossier on Luchansky and Nordex delivered to the German government last January by the BND, Germany's federal intelligence agency. Sections of the dossier were also passed on to BND's British counterparts and to the Austrian police from where excerpts quickly found their way into the Austrian media.

One damning section, which appeared in the Austrian press last summer, states flatly that "Nordex has been set up . . . with the aim of bringing the foreign currency accumulated by the KGB and top Communist party officials into the West."

It adds that "Nordex companies are probably involved in money-laundering operations for third persons and companies known to have criminal connections" and, more specifically: "There are indications that Nordex companies are involved in the international weapons... as well as nuclear material and technology trade... smuggled (out of the former Soviet Union) across the Baltic Sea."

Devastating though such accusations seem, the case against Luchansky is far from open-and-shut. Intelligence experts in Austria and Israel have privately expressed doubts about the reliability of the BND report. And the report's investigations could find only circumstantial evidence connecting Luchansky with potential trouble spots.

One high-level Israeli law enforcement official familiar with the accusations in the BND dossier and, more generally, in CIA files, calls them "laughable. If they were true. Luchansky would constitute a potential danger to Israel's security," the official says. "The fact that he is allowed to represent Israeli business interests outside the country means that we do not believe these reports to be reliable."

Luchansky has never been officially charged with any wrongdoings anywhere. Even the Austrian police, after perusing the BND dossier, said they saw no proof of any criminal activity and no reason to open any official investigation.

Luchansky told THE REPORT he has offered to be interviewed by, and to open the Nordex books to, the BND, the CIA and any other intelligence services or law-enforcement agencies, whose representatives, he says, have never spoken to him. No one has taken up his offer.

"I do not think they are interested in gathering facts anymore," he charges. "I represent an easy target for them, for all sorts of accusations."

A stocky, slightly disheveled and surprisingly unassuming man, Grigoriy Luchansky was born in 1945 in Tashkent. His parents had fled there from Latvia four years earlier to escape the Nazis. After the war, they moved back to Latvia, and Grigoriy became an engineering student. By the mid-1970s, aged barely 30, he was provost of the Latvian State University. His managerial skills were quickly recognized and in the early 1980s he was sent to the Urals to run one of the largest Soviet industrial enterprises, Uralwagon, which produced heavy machinery and tanks. He revolutionized production there and the plant — which occupied an area the size of Washington, D.C. and employed tens of thousands — was one of the Soviet Union's few relatively efficient and profit-making industrial enterprises.

Luchansky arrived in Vienna in 1990 as the USSR was imploding. He set up Nordex with what he says was a minimal amount of capital, some of it invested by friends, and began doing trade deals involving millions of dollars based on his insider's knowledge of the Soviet economy. Major European banks and investment firms, eager to get in on burgeoning East-West trade, gave him loans and credit lines.

What Luchansky had to offer was access to the oil and oil products, fertilizers, metals and chemicals of the former Soviet Union at attractive prices; by 1992, he was doing over $1 billion in business a year, and Nordex was considered one of Russia's top 10 private companies.

"Investors wanted to put their money in a successful company," he told The Report, explaining how an unknown firm could attract financing. "People trust me. I was one of the first who recognized the potential in being able to buy a ton of Russian fertilizers for $25 and selling it in Germany for $100."

In 1993 Luchansky demonstrated his business flair by arranging a $250-million three-way barter deal in Russian oil, Ukrainian agricultural products and German heavy machinery. It saved Ukraine from disaster by restoring the supply of oil from Russia — previously cut off because of the two states' dispute over ownership of the former Soviet Black Sea fleet. Ukraine apparently still owes Nordex some $100 million from that deal. But debt or no debt, Luchansky is known and respected in Ukraine as the man who saved the country from freezing that winter.

By 1994, Nordex's turnover had reached some $3 billion and it had 40 subsidiaries and joint-venture firms in the West, and some 100 such affiliates in the former Soviet empire. It employs close to 8,000 people. Among the big names associated with Nordex are Robert Maxwell's sons Kevin and Ian in London, the daughter and son-in-law of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, and until recently former Israeli finance minister Yitzhaq Moda'i.

"Nordex represents a side of Russia often overlooked in Western analyses of the political instability and economic collapse," London's Financial Times wrote in April 1994. "Where we see crisis, Luchansky and his comrades see the Klondike of the late 20th century.... By manipulating his network of contacts throughout the former Soviet Union with an insider's deftness, (he) has profited from the vast natural resources of the country."

But that same year reports of a darker nature began surfacing, mainly in the German and Austrian press, charging that Nordex was a front for the money set aside by corrupt former KGB and top Communist party officials.

Luchansky first felt the impact that spring, when he was refused entry into Canada; security officials told THE MONTREAL GAZETTE he had failed a background check and was not able to satisfy them about the source of his funds. Similar reasons were later cited by British officials.

When this summer's invitation to dinner with Clinton arrived, Luchansky asked the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv for an assurance that he'd be able to travel freely to Washington. Despite repeated inquiries, no such assurance was forthcoming, and Luchansky concluded that it would be prudent to stay away. "No one told me I could not go," he stressed to The Report, "but I did not want to suffer treatment similar to that I got at Heathrow."

The Jerusalem Report caught up with Luchansky during one of his frequent short visits to Israel, this time to attend a memorial service for a friend's mother. Speaking a mixture of Russian and English, lunching at the elegant Kavkaz (Caucasus) restaurant, he issued a strident onslaught against his accusers, declaring that "the rumors being spread about me are worthy of the KGB. We are in the midst of a new cold war being waged by various fringe political forces in Russia," he charged, "including the former Communists as well as the extreme right wing — and they are using the Western intelligence agencies to smear the elected (Yeltsin) government and its supporters."

Asked why Western intelligence agencies would be so ready to accept damning information against him Luchansky asserted: "After the end of the Cold War, all the special services realized that their time was about to run out. They needed to invent a new threat, and that new threat is crime now coming out of Russia.

"Of course not all is kosher in the Russian business world," he allowed. "And I realize that some Russian criminals now operate in the West. But what does that have to do with Nordex? Nordex has never done anything illegal."

Luchansky also charged that anti-Semitism was at work in what he called the "organized campaign of lies" against his firm: I belong to a new breed of Russian businesspeople, popularly known there as 'the New Russians,' many of whom happen to be Jewish. The extreme elements in Russia, which are the main source of rumors about us, are strongly anti-Semitic — 'a New Russian' for many is just another way of saying Zhid' [kike]."

Luchansky went on to describe his operations in stirring terms, highlighting its charitable work. "We are a large company, but not a rich company," he said. And yet Nordex donated "tens of millions of dollars annually for medicines for the aged, and for food and gifts to the very poor at Christmas." None of this, he reflected sadly, has ever been mentioned in the media reports about him.

Moreover, he enthused, Nordex is making a long-term philanthropic investment in Russia's future. It pays the tuition of hundreds of Russian students at the most prominent universities in Western Europe and North America, he noted, "so that they can get the best education and then go back home to help rebuild Russia."

It is not surprising that Nordex has attracted the attention of Western intelligence. After all, Luchansky's empire does huge amounts of business in former Soviet republics over which the CIA and the U.S. administration have expressed particular concern. Both Ukraine and Kazakhstan inherited nuclear weapons when the Soviet Union disintegrated. Concerned that nuclear-hungry Iran, Iraq and North Korea might try to buy bombs from the cash-poor new states, Washington has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the two countries, to convince their governments to sell the weapons to the United States, or to Russia.

Earlier this year, Kazakhstan sold half a ton of weapons-grade uranium to the United States. Privately, U.S. officials say the shipment was recovered from a region where nuclear material has been making its way onto the black market.

Luchansky, however, insisted all Nordex business — trading in oil and chemicals, building new factories and modernizing old Soviet plants — is "honest." It's "ridiculous," he said, to charge "that we invested in nuclear weapons, or drugs."

So is Luchansky just a smart businessman doing clean business in a shady climate, or a corrupt operator with a disarming gift for smooth-talking? The absence of any indictments against him underlines that, for now at least, the evidence is inconclusive.

And Israel, again for now, is clearly ready to accept him at face value. "He's no different from those who made their fortunes in the Wild West," says a top-level Israel law enforcement official. "He's a latecomer in the game of international business and is trying to become a major player quickly. He may be cutting corners here and there, and may be very unrefined. But he is making every effort to transform himself into a respected, and respectable businessman."

IAI Incurs Heavy Losses From Arrow Project

TA2712120595 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Dec 95 p A2

[Report by Sharon Sade]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arrow project has inflicted heavy losses on Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI], which was forced to invest millions of dollars in excess of the funding it gets from the Defense Ministry and from the United States to develop the missile's infrastructure and systems. The extra costs were incurred due to difficulties in the initial stages of development, which IAI has since managed to overcome.

Security sources said that IAI attaches a great strategic importance to the project, which is why it decided to invest its own capital to promote it and build a back-up infrastructure. At this point IAI has absorbed the extra costs, but according to sources it may ask the customer to cover these expenses. IAI's management refused to comment on the issue.

The security sources added that the Defense Ministry and the U.S. team overseeing the project are pleased with its progress, despite the relatively high turnover of workers in the past two years as a result of IAI's rehabilitation program. According to the sources, the turnover did not significantly affect the project, since the workers who left were replaced by others and did not include people in key positions.

The sources went on to say that the operational version of the Arrow will apparently be tested in February to check system and flight performance.

They added that the test depends on the weather conditions and will serve as a dress rehearsal in anticipation of the interception test at a later stage in which the Arrow will have to locate a target missile, home on it, and destroy it.

The date of the intercept test, which is of utmost importance for the continuation of the project, has not yet been set and depends on results of the February test. It had been initially planned for this month, but the defense establishment asked IAI to thoroughly review the flight test and treat it as if it were the intercept test, even if this caused a delay. Consequently, the test was set for a new date.

Elta, an IAI subsidiary, has finished building a second operational detection and identification radar for the Arrow, which is now undergoing calibration tests. The first detection radar has been positioned in the Arrow's testing field in Palmahim and will play a passive role in the upcoming test.

Mubarek Meets With King Husayn in al-'Aqabah

Discuss Peace Process

JN2612162295 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received His Excellency Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and the delegation accompanying him at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah today. The two leaders held a closed meeting followed by an expanded session attended by His Highness Crown Prince Hasan and senior officials from both sides.

The two leaders discussed the peace process and its latest developments, as well as the Syrian-Israeli track. They stressed the need to exert every effort to promote the peace process on all tracks in order to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the region. They also expressed optimism and welcomed the recent positive developments on the Syrian-Israeli track.

The talks also tackled relations between the two fraternal countries and ways to promote them and clear up Arab differences. The two sides also discussed the situation in Iraq, stressing the need to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity and safety and to exert every effort to ease the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people.

His Excellency Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak left the city of al-'Aqabah this afternoon at the end of a brief visit to Jordan. His excellency was seen off at al-'Aqabah airport by His Majesty King Husayn and His Highness Crown Prince Hasan. Also on hand to see him off was His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and several senior officials.

Speak on Nuclear Arms, Peace

NC2612175095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1630 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Report on news conference by King Husayn and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak with chief editors of Egyptian newspapers at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah on 26 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 26 Dec (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stated that if peace prevails in the Middle East there will be no logic in some countries continued possession of nuclear weapons.

Speaking to the chief editors of Egyptian newspapers at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah today, President Mubarak added that any attempt to link the question of nuclear weapons to normalization of relations between each country and Israel is unacceptable, for each country is a free and sovereign state. President Mubarak noted in this regard that Saudi Arabia, for instance, was not in a state of war with the Soviet Union yet the two did not have diplomatic relations or normalization. He pointed out that once the peace process is completed and peace agreements signed, then we must start discussing the question of nuclear weapons.

Asked about the nuclear option and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, President Mubarak said: We talked with His Majesty King Husayn about this matter. The president added that he had talked with late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and current Prime Minister Shim'on Peres about the nuclear option. Their excuse was that there was no peace in the region at present, he said. The president added that after resolving the Palestinian issue and making progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks it will be possible to talk about the nuclear option.

President Mubarak added: I have heard some remarks linking the question of freeing the region from nuclear weapons to Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, which is a strange thing. He noted that the possession of nuclear weapons by any country in the world is the responsibility of the entire world community. The president pointed out that what we want is for the Middle East, not just Iran or Israel, to be completely free of nuclear weapons, otherwise we all would search for nuclear weapons.

On Jordanian-Syrian relations, President Mubarak noted that we must expect to find forces against peace and good relations between brothers, and this exists everywhere in the world. The important thing is to have the will to keep our relations strong, he added.

Asked if it is possible for Syria and Israel to sign a peace agreement next year, the Jordanian monarch expressed his optimism about the prospects of signing such agreement. King Husayn noted that all the parties concerned are determined to proceed to achieve peace for the progress, stability, and better future for the region.

King Husayn was then asked: Do you give priority to the peace process or economic cooperation? King Husayn said that the two must proceed together.

Asked about the response he received from President Mubarak about alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people, King Husayn said that everybody is concerned about the Iraqi people. Egypt and Jordan are eager for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq as well as the Iraqi people's right to self-determination, he added. King Husayn stressed that Egypt and Jordan support the Iraqi people with all their power to alleviate their suffering.

'Dialogue' With Chief Editors

JN2612203795 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 26 Dec 95

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[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn and His Excellency Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak met with the chief editors of a number of Jordanian and Egyptian newspapers at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah today. During the meeting, a dialogue was held on several issues of interest to the region.

His Majesty King Husayn said: We are all eager to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, and we hope that the Iraqi people can determine their fate and course and that we can extend our utmost support to them so that they can emerge from this dark tunnel to the future they deserve.

Regarding Jordanian-Egyptian relations and whether there is any sensitivity, his majesty said: There is no such sensitivity, and there is no justification for its existence. Egypt continues to have leadership and weight. When we work together, we produce good results for our Arab nation. This is the situation now, God willing.

Regarding confederation with Iraq, his majesty said: I have said nothing about confederation with Iraq at all. His Majesty King Husayn also said: We all are worried by the situation in Iraq because in practice partition has taken place. When its leadership decided to hold a referendum, it excluded large parts of the population. This is the bitter situation we are witnessing. Iraq has suffered much, and the Iraqi people have also suffered to the extent that everyone of us is feeling that suffering. Therefore, we are dutybound to urge all the sectors and different factions of the Iraqis to hold an Iraqi-Iraqi dialogue to assure the Iraqis that the bloodbath expected by many people will not take place and that through their cooperation, the Iraqis can save their country. We are supporting them all. The expression being used is federation, and replying to Iraqis, I say: This has nothing to do with me, but it is up to the Iraqis to choose their own way. Federation may be one of the topics being discussed by the Iraqis themselves. Our duty is to support the Iraqis to reach understanding. We help them and we are afraid that Iraq will be partitioned and disintegrated, which will threaten not only Iraq, but also the entire region and us.

Concerning a federation with Iraq, His Majesty King Husayn said: This is not my business. However, if we view federation, we will see that Federal Germany is a federation of a very refined type. There are other bright examples. What is the formula that would make Iraqis come together and rebuild Iraq, which has suffered and is now a cause of concern. Around Iraq, there are many sides that have objectives and intentions. We fear that this tragedy would continue. This would result in a catastrophe that would not only harm Iraq and the Iraqis but everybody else. We hope the Iraqi people can get rid of the cordon which encircles them and do away with injustice and the denial of their rights inside and outside their country.

On relations with Syria, His Majesty King Husayn said: We have no problem. We proceeded from the same point in Madrid and provided an umbrella for the brother Palestinians to be able to regain their rights on their national soil. We encourage and support them to the best of our ability.

His Majesty King Husayn added: I cannot leave my country open to all possibilities. Praise be to God, now, for the first time, there are recognized borders and we have regained our land and waters. As I have said, we proceeded from the same point at the Madrid conference. We had hoped that coordination would be among everybody. However, coordination does not mean that Jordan should be a bargaining chip in anyone's hand at any time. Coordination means that partners should have the same rights and that they should tell each other about all issues and that they should plan together. This, regrettably, did not happen. We all encourage and support, like our Syrian brothers, the idea of working to reach a just and comprehensive peace acceptable to everybody.

Hold News Conference

JN2612133995 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1210 GMT 26 Dec 95

[News conference by King Husayn and Egyptian President Husni Mubarek at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah with unidentified correspondents on 26 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Your excellency President Mubarak, clearing the Arab atmosphere is a permanent objective in all your talks. Did your talks with King Husayn cover this issue — the issue of Arab reconciliation — especially after the progress that took place on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Mubarak] Arab reconciliation is a constant issue. Of course, we raised it and talked about it and about the efforts being made in this direction. It is our strong hope that the situation now is better than in the past years. Let us hope for well in the future.

Mubarek Meets With King Husayn in al-'Aqabah

Discuss Peace Process

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Asked about the nuclear option and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, President Mubarak said: We talked with His Majesty King Husayn about this matter. The president added that he had talked with late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and current Prime Minister Shim'on Peres about the nuclear option. Their excuse was that there was no peace in the region at present, he said. The president added that after resolving the Palestinian issue and making progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks it will be possible to talk about the nuclear option.

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On Jordanian-Syrian relations, President Mubarak noted that we must expect to find forces against peace and good relations between brothers, and this exists everywhere in the world. The important thing is to have the will to keep our relations strong, he added.

Asked if it is possible for Syria and Israel to sign a peace agreement next year, the Jordanian monarch expressed his optimism about the prospects of signing such agreement. King Husayn noted that all the parties concerned are determined to proceed to achieve peace for the progress, stability, and better future for the region.

King Husayn was then asked: Do you give priority to the peace process or economic cooperation? King Husayn said that the two must proceed together.

Asked about the response he received from President Mubarak about alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people, King Husayn said that everybody is concerned about the Iraqi people. Egypt and Jordan are eager for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq as well as the Iraqi people's right to self-determination, he added. King Husayn stressed that Egypt and Jordan support the Iraqi people with all their power to alleviate their suffering.

Asked about a federation in Iraq, King Husayn said that the Iraqi people will decide what they want. We say that if Iraq is divided, it will have extremely harmful results, he added. However, he noted that Iraq is now practically divided and that what is taking place there is a cause for concern for all of us. The Jordanian monarch called on all Iraqi factions to use all their abilities to conduct an inter-Iraqi dialogue to prevent bloodbaths among Iraqis. He hoped that Iraq would get rid of all the signs of injustice and deprivation that it is now experiencing.

On Jordanian-Egyptian relations, the Jordanian monarch denied any sensitivity in bilateral relations. He added that Egypt has an importance and a role and we are working for the good of the Arab nation.

Regarding relations between Jordan and Syria, King Husayn said that there are no problems with Syria. He added: We proceeded together from Madrid toward peace and we encourage and support the Syrian brothers to regain their rights through peace.

Asked about Jordanian-Saudi relations, President Mubarak said: I believe that there are no defects in bilateral relations. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal has told me that he will visit Jordan the day after tomorrow, Thursday [28 December]. He added that relations between the two countries are normal.

On his role in bringing views between Syria and Jordan closer, President Mubarak said: If I find a chance to do so I will not hesitate, for I am an advocate of friendship, cooperation, and peace. By nature, I do not like rancor and if I find a chance I will not hesitate to do so.

On the Yemeni-Eritrean problem, President Mubarak said that the issue was complicated and has led to this problem. Egypt, he added, did not hesitate for one second to mend the rift and eliminate the differences. Today the atmosphere is better than yesterday, but the issue needs work. We are in the process of reaching a real rapprochement between the two sides, he added, noting that there are forces that are driving wedges to weaken the positions. However, he added, there is determination that Arab cooperation is in the interest of everyone, and not just one country.

Asked about the mixing up of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the peace process, President Mubarak said: I do not want to anticipate events, particularly with regard to the Syrian presence in Lebanon. He pointed out that as far as he understood from Syria and Lebanon, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the peace process are proceeding in parallel.

King Husayn was then asked about Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and whether this is a threat to Jordan as much as it is a threat to Egypt. King Husayn said: We share Egypt's view on this matter. We want the region to be free of nuclear weapons, particularly when a comprehensive peace is achieved.

Asked about investment in the riviera area in the Gulf of 'Aqaba and whether there is any delay in this regard, President Mubarak said there is no delay. There are tourism and economic cooperation agreements. There is no problem at all between us and the Jordanians or between us and the Israelis. There are big Jordanian ventures in Egypt—in the 10 Ramadan city, the 6 October city, and Nasr city. I visited a big paper factory that is owned by Jordanians.

On the topics discussed with King Husayn, President Mubarak said we discussed many issues, including Iraq. There is agreement on the issue of Iraq. We also discussed federalism and the danger the partition of Iraq will pose for the Arab nation.

President Mubarak affirmed that he is against the partition of Iraq. As an example, he referred to the attempt by Schwarzkopf, commander of the military operations during the Gulf War, to advance to Baghdad to topple President Saddam Husayn. He said he contacted U.S. President George Bush and expressed to him his opposition to this idea.

President Mubarak said we are against such actions because it is very dangerous to allow an Arab or non-Arab states to topple a head of state from his post, no matter who he is. He said that such matters should be left to the people and that allowing such actions to take place would be a return to the law of the jungle.

On terrorism, President Mubarak said terrorism is an international phenomenon. We are part of the world. The states, especially the Arab states, must cooperate to confront this danger. He said we are prepared to cooperate with all states to eliminate this phenomenon. We are even prepared to cooperate with Sudan, which is sheltering a large number of terrorists, to eliminate terrorism.

President Mubarak said it is not true that terrorism is Arab or Islamic. There is terrorism in the United States and Japan. Islam is innocent of terrorism. Islam is against bloodshed and crime. Islam is a religion of tolerance. He called for international cooperation to combat terrorist activity.

On the same subject, King Husayn said the Jordanians do not condone extremism or terrorism. In Jordan there is a national charter which everyone participated in drafting. Everyone must respect the constitution. We have no problem in this regard. He noted that are attempts by some extremists in Jordan but the people will not permit them to carry out terrorist acts.

'Dialogue' With Chief Editors

JN2612203795 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 26 Dec 95

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His Majesty King Husayn said: We are all eager to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, and we hope that the Iraqi people can determine their fate and course and that we can extend our utmost support to them so that they can emerge from this dark tunnel to the future they deserve.

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Concerning a federation with Iraq, His Majesty King Husayn said: This is not my business. However, if we view federation, we will see that Federal Germany is a federation of a very refined type. There are other bright examples. What is the formula that would make Iraqis come together and rebuild Iraq, which has suffered and is now a cause of concern. Around Iraq, there are many sides that have objectives and intentions. We fear that this tragedy would continue. This would result in a catastrophe that would not only harm Iraq and the Iraqis but everybody else. We hope the Iraqi people can get rid of the cordon which encircles them and do away with injustice and the denial of their rights inside and outside their country.

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His Majesty King Husayn added: I cannot leave my country open to all possibilities. Praise be to God, now, for the first time, there are recognized borders and we have regained our land and waters. As I have said, we proceeded from the same point at the Madrid conference. We had hoped that coordination would be among everybody. However, coordination does not mean that Jordan should be a bargaining chip in anyone's hand at any time. Coordination means that partners should have the same rights and that they should tell each other about all issues and that they should plan together. This, regrettably, did not happen. We all encourage and support, like our Syrian brothers, the idea of working to reach a just and comprehensive peace acceptable to everybody.

Hold News Conference

JN2612133995 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1210 GMT 26 Dec 95

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[Mubarak] Arab reconciliation is a constant issue. Of course, we raised it and talked about it and about the efforts being made in this direction. It is our strong hope that the situation now is better than in the past years. Let us hope for well in the future.

[Correspondent] What is Jordan's stand on the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute, and how does President Mubarak believe this dispute should be resolved to ensure the security of the Red Sea region now and in the future, God willing?

[Mubarak] We have been informed about the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute. I have sent a special envoy to Eritrean President Isaias Afworki and President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. Eritrea is a friendly African country. Yemen is a friendly Arab country. We are mediating between the two sides. I believe that the delegation that has been sent arrived at very good ideas. We will resume contacts. It was said yesterday that there was an escalation in operations against one of the islands. I talked with the Eritrean president at 0800 today. He said there is nothing of this sort, and that these are nothing but rumors. I hope that a reconciliation will be reached between them, and that the two sides will arrive at a peaceful solution. Otherwise, they should meet to resolve the problem or raise it at the International Court of Justice.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute?

[Husayn] Naturally, it is the same opinion spelled out by his excellency the president. I believe that his excellency is in a position that enables him to serve the objective of reaching a solution satisfactory to both sides through dialogue soon. As his excellency the president indicated, God willing, these operations will be halted soon, because they meet nobody's interest. At the same time, this will give the dialogue the chance to attain the required objective and matters to return to normal.

[Correspondent] His Majesty King Husayn and President Mubarak: What does today's meeting add to Egyptian-Jordanian relations and what is your excellency's view of these relations in the future?

[Husayn] These relations...

[Mubarak, interrupting] [Words indistinct] Give the Jordanian journalists a chance to ask. [laughter]

[Husayn] These relations are based and built on firm foundations. As long as I live, I will be proud of this brotherhood between us. This meeting has been the outcome of this gracious visit by my brother to his second homeland and to al-'Aqabah in particular. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss with him all issues with our accustomed frankness and clarity. I believe that it is a major step in our joint march to perform our duties to the best of our ability. It is also a major step regarding our bilateral and Arab relations and the service of the coming generations.

[Correspondent] Your Majesty King Husayn: What is your perspective on the peace process at present, given the recent regional developments and the progress seen on the Syrian track?

[Husayn] I am very happy. Progress has now become a tangible reality and a concrete development. We have always sought to achieve a comprehensive peace in this region. We hope and pray to God that this will be achieved very soon.

[Correspondent] Your excellency the president: Were the Jordanian and Egyptian views harmonious on the topics discussed, particularly developments in Iraq?

[Mubarak] There are no differences between us in terms of thinking or approaches toward Iraq. Both of us support the territorial integrity of Iraq. Both of us seek to end the suffering of the Iraqi people. There are no differences between myself and my brother his majesty the king in this regard.

[Correspondent] Do you support federation in Iraq?

[Mubarak] The issue of a federation in Iraq is a matter that concerns Iraqis. We do not have anything to do with it.

[Correspondent] Your majesty the king: Is it possible to establish a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation once the Palestinian people obtain all their rights?

[Husayn] It is strange that federation is undesired, whereas confederation is desired in this case [Husayn laughs]. [words indistinct] Sir, the whole issue is left to the future when the Palestinian kinsfolk and brothers, God willing, manage to obtain their rights on their national soil, and express their views frankly and clearly. Relations with them are special and distinguished. When this happens, God willing, it will be possible to achieve the ideal status through dialogue between the parties concerned.

[Correspondent] Your excellency the president: Based on your recent talks with Israeli officials, how serious were Israeli officials in the efforts to discuss the Israeli nuclear program?

[Mubarak] I raised the ideas we had before about the Israeli nuclear program. We will wait pending the conclusion of peace agreements with our brothers in Syria and Lebanon, and the full resolution of the Palestine question. When this happens, we must discuss the nuclear option, for this region must be free of mass destruction weapons under all circumstances.

[Correspondent] Your excellency the president: Do you expect the achievement of a Syrian-Israeli agreement?

[Mubarak] A Syrian-Israeli (?agreement)? It is my strong wish that it will be achieved in 1996.

[Correspondent] Do you expect that in the year 1996...

[Mubarak, interrupting] It is my strong wish that it will be in 1996.

[Correspondent] Your majesty the king: Given the current Arab issues, is there a need for an Arab summit, even if it were to be a mini-summit?

[Husayn] God be praised, on the level of my brother the president and myself. [Husayn laughs]

[Mubarak, interrupting] We convene mini-summits. We then hold larger summits. Eventually, we will convene an even larger summit, God willing.

[Husayn] God willing.

King on Visit, Syria-Israel Talks

JN2612211195 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Interview with King Husayn by Suzan 'Afanah in al-'Aqabah on 26 December "at the end of Mubarak's visit to al-'Aqabah"; from the "News at Ten" program — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Husayn] We are very very happy to have had the opportunity to welcome President Mubarak here. We had a very very good discussion over all issues of mutual interest and concern and the peace process and all the promising developments as regards hopefully the attainment of a comprehensive peace in the region. We talked about Iraq and our worries over the fate of the people of Iraq and reemphasized our commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of the country and in doing everything we can to help the Iraqis resolve their problem as rapidly as possible so that they are not a danger to themselves and to everyone around. We spoke about bilateral relations, and I think that we have reached a level of mutual understanding and determination to cooperate in the times ahead. That is very very promising.

['Afanah] Sir, what are your expectations about this round of Syrian-Israeli track talks, and is Jordan going to make any efforts, mediation efforts, to bring them closer together?

[Husayn] Jordan is obviously not involved, but Jordan has always sought a comprehensive peace, and I am very happy to see movement towards that objective. And I hope that we will see some results before long.

['Afanah] How about mediation in the Yemeni conflict?

[Husayn] I hope that our Egyptian brethren can play a major role in bringing this situation under control and in resorting to dialogue rather than the use of force as has been the case recently.

King Husayn on Iraq, Regional Role, Syria Ties

JN2612111995 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 25-31 Dec 95 pp 10-12

[Interview with King Husayn by George Sam'an and Ghassan Shirbil in Amman "in the wake of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region"; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-WASAT] The Palestinian entity is increasingly taking shape. Will this promote the chances of discussing a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation? Where will Israel stand in such a confederation?

[Husayn] There are no discussions of this issue at this point, nor will there be such discussions until the Palestinian brothers regain their full rights on their national soil in a manner that is gratifying to them. Then, and in a climate of freedom and fraternal dialogue and against the backdrop of the very strong Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, people will determine the nature of their future relationship. Our position at present is to support the Palestinian brothers by all means and in every possible way and under all circumstances until they reach the situation they deem satisfactory, God willing.

[AL-WASAT] Secretary Christopher's tour has produced what he called substantive progress on the Syrian-Israeli track. Do you expect a breakthrough shortly on this track? Do you believe that there will be a comprehensive settlement in 1996?

[Husayn] I cannot anticipate future developments. However, I hope for a comprehensive and full peace in the region. We have always been advocates of a comprehensive peace. It is our hope that the parties concerned will progress toward the achievement of such a peace on the basis of mutually agreeable foundations.

[AL-WASAT] Jordan's growing regional role has elicited criticism and reservations. Do you not fear that this role could diminish if Syria and Israel conclude a settlement?

[Husayn] In all our moves and efforts, we did not plan to enlarge our role. Rather, we have always sought to promote the interests of our people and nation. We are not seeking a role that is larger than our size and reality. Nonetheless, we will continue to express our views freely in the interest of this nation. We will also continue to take the stands that would promote the interests of our people and nation.

[AL-WASAT] After your talks with Secretary Christopher, you urged the Iraqi opposition to close ranks in order to save Iraq. Does Jordan have a concept regarding this salvation process? If the answer is in the affirmative, does this concept enjoy the support of the United States and that of the influential and concerned Arab states? Is the idea of federation still viable?

[Husayn] It is good that we are given the opportunity to answer these questions. To us, Iraq is extremely important. Its suffering pains us, and we are affected by what happened and what is happening. We believe that Iraq is on the threshold of a very tough period. Iraq and its unity must be saved, and Iraqis representing the whole of Iraq must get together to build a bright future. Otherwise, Iraq will be plagued by further catastrophes, disarray, and fragmentation. In case the latter scenario materializes, God forbid, the whole region will suffer serious consequences. Iraq's unity is our constant concern. We aim to save Iraq from its sufferings, which are caused by lack of democracy and respect for human rights, and also by the embargo clamped on its people. We have undertaken to perform this duty to serve Iraq and its people in the best way we can. We are doing so since our efforts to start a constructive dialogue with Iraqi officials to save Iraq from its ordeal in the past years have failed.

In fact, light should not be shed on the issue of federation. We call on Iraqis to hold a debate and dialogue among themselves in order to achieve national reconciliation, assure themselves about their future, and remove their fears of a bloodbath, which they constantly talk about.

Regarding Iraq's future situation, the Iraqis might possibly be reassured by holding a dialogue among representatives from all components of Iraq to reach a future formula that is acceptable to them.

I would like to explain something in this regard: I said that a federation could be a means to effect the required change in the relationship among the Iraqis themselves after all the tragedies they have experienced. This opinion is only one of many proposals being made. It is up to the Iraqis themselves to determine their own future and the optimal formula for relations among themselves. For example, I say that in this phase, the division of Iraq is almost a reality. Even the recent presidential referendum excluded parts of Iraq, particularly northern and southern Iraq, because Iraq is practically divided.

We are drawing the attention of the Arabs and Iraqis to the Iraqi situation and stressing the need to act as soon as possible to avoid entrenching this reality out of our duty toward Iraq. Iraq is the Mesopotamia and the country of civilizations, history, and resources. At this phase, I believe that Iraq's future is mortgaged indefinitely because it has to pay compensations to various states in this world. Iraq must be rescued, and the Iraqi people's suffering must be removed.

A short while ago, you asked me about the confederation with the Palestinian brothers. The confederation is a known thing, and it is less solid than federation, Why, for example, do we favor confederation as a form of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship while rejecting the mere discussion of federation in Iraq and forgetting that Germany is a federation and so is the United States? Some have chosen to highlight the negative aspect of this issue.

We want to consolidate the relationship among the Iraqis, and I hope the confusion that has occurred will not happen again. This issue is among the Iraqis themselves, and Jordan has nothing to do with it. In other words, there is no talk at all about a federation or a confederation between Jordan and Iraq.

[AL-WASAT] Do we understand that you have given up hope for holding a useful dialogue with the Iraqi leadership? Do you believe that there is an international decision to overthrow the Iraqi regime?

[Husayn] I believe that anyone who looks at the Security Council resolutions will find that they not only focus on the weapons of mass destruction, they also talk about human rights, northern and southern Iraq, and a host of other issues. Our failure so far to achieve any progress on the path of ending Iraq's suffering means that we have regrettably failed to achieve a result through the dialogue with our brethren in Iraq at the leadership level.

[AL-WASAT] For a quarter-century, relations between Jordan and Syria have witnessed fluctuations. What prevents these relations from becoming stable, and what prevents the two countries from maintaining constant coordination and understanding?

[Husayn] I cannot find any reason or justification. However, there has been talk about Jordan's growing regional role. There could be others who are looking and working for attaining such an objective. Consequently, that could be one of the reasons for the disagreement or confrontation.

[AL-WASAT] How do you interpret the current Syrian campaign against Jordan, especially the charges that you want to partition Iraq and establish a regional alliance led by Israel?

[Husayn] I have just talked about roles and related ideas and intentions. This could be the case with regard to our Syrian brothers. I have been trying to interpret this position against the backdrop of past experiences, including the meeting between the Syrian and Iraqi leaders in Jordan. Then, during the Iraq-Iran war, Syria insisted on the immediate declaration of unity between the two counties before improving relations between them. Against the backdrop of the Ba'th Party and its existence in the two countries, I think Syria may have special purposes and objectives as far as Iraq is concerned, and may have felt that Jordan has begun to threaten it, one way or another. But we have nothing of this kind in our minds. We believe that what matters now is to save Iraq, and this could be the real reason of the campaign.

[AL-WASAT] How do you view Lebanon's future in light of the peace process?

[Husayn] We hope that Lebanon will fully restore its territory, waters, and rights. Apart from that, I cannot tell what the picture will be.

[AL-WASAT] What are the basic obstacles to the normalization of Jordan's relations with Kuwait? Are there certain conditions?

[Husayn] As far as we are concerned, we do not have any conditions. We have done all that could be done in the hope that relations would quickly return to normal. We have nothing more to offer in this regard. We believe that it is a matter of time. When our Kuwaiti brothers decide to chose cooperation and the establishment of strong relations on sound bases, then we will welcome that. We have nothing more to say in this regard.

[AL-WASAT] Circumstances have prevented the convocation of a Saudi-Jordanian summit. How do you assess Jordan's current relations with Saudi Arabia?

[Husayn] Relations with Saudi Arabia, are very good and are on their way up to the required level, God willing. I hope the circumstances of my brother King Fahd, custodian of the two holy mosques, will make it possible to hold a meeting between us. I am confident that the meeting in itself will make it possible to restore the relations to their past status and even better.

[AL-WASAT] You recently used an extremely firm language in warning the domestic opposition. Do you have fears about the democratic experience in Jordan, particularly the so-called Jordanian model in containing the fundamentalist formula?

[Husayn] Regarding the first part of the question, yes I have fears about the Jordanian experience. I lived a similar experience in the fifties. Naturally, we were shocked and suffered a setback then as far as democracy and everything we hoped for were concerned. We truly hoped then that Jordan would be a model for others. Therefore, I am afraid that democracy might be used as a weapon against democracy in this country. I hope that all of us will be aware enough to foil such efforts so as to arrive at an atmosphere in which everybody can talk responsibly and take part in making decisions and in shaping the future.

[AL-WASAT] Jordanian officials have spoken of an Iraqi penetration of Jordanian media and trade organizations. Meanwhile, you have spoken of your determination to stop any penetration attempt. What are the measures that you will take to thwart such attempts?

[Husayn] This is a vicious circle we are revolving in at present. However, I hope that awareness and accumulated experience regarding our march would help produce a clear picture and ensure a sound march in the future. And here, I do not want to focus on Iraq, for there are many parties engaged in politics in this country acting on behalf of others.

[AL-WASAT] Two years ago, you announced your intention to set up a family council that would be charged with electing a crown prince. Have there been any developments in this regard?

[Husayn] The idea is still in my mind. It is still premature to debate this issue pending the attainment of the ideal result, God willing.

[AL-WASAT] Now that more than a year has passed since the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, are you satisfied with the scope of normalization between the two countries?

[Husayn] God be praised, the scope of normalization has been good thus far. All that was agreed upon has been implemented and complied with. I believe that some time is needed to achieve spectacularly positive results. We need time to focus on what we can do in various areas.

[AL-WASAT] You have expressed a willingness to offer the dearest of sacrifices for peace. Do you think that the opponents of peace could assassinate the champions of peace?

[Husayn] The possibility is there. As far as I am concerned, God be praised, nothing of the sort has been attempted.

[AL-WASAT] Israel grants Arabs of East Jerusalem Israeli citizenship. Do you not believe that this endangers the future of Jerusalem? Is Jordan ready to grant them permanent Jordanian passports to thwart the Israeli scheme in this regard?

[Husayn] If the issue has something to do with passports, then it must be debated with the Palestinian brothers before we can make any moves in this regard. However, I think that the Jerusalem issue has been deferred to the final-status negotiations, whose beginnings will coincide with Israeli elections. The Jerusalem issue will be addressed within the agreed framework on schedule.

I think that our position on Jerusalem is clear and known. We believe that Jerusalem must serve as a symbol of peace to followers of the three monotheistic faiths; that is, sovereignty over the holy city must transcend the sovereignty of any state or party. Jerusalem belongs to all. As for Arab Jerusalem, it has been occupied since 1967. We hope that it will be the capital of the Palestinians, just as Western Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, even though it has thus far not been recognized as such.

[AL-WASAT] What is the extent of the U.S. Administration's response to Jordan's request to meet its military needs in order to promote its armed forces?

[Husayn] This response is good and extremely encouraging. We are awaiting specific results during the U.S. defense secretary's upcoming visit 3-5 January.

[AL-WASAT] Do you believe that there will be any role or place for the Arab League and the lower level regional systems in the new Middle East?

[Husayn] If there is an intention to turn the Arab League into what it should be, I believe that there must be numerous opportunities to work for achieving integration and cooperation among all Arab states. The Arab League means us. The results will be positive if we in the Arab World—at the level of leaders— believe in the Arab League and in its role, and if we come to the conclusion that it should act in the right way.

[AL-WASAT] Will Jordan host the Iraqi opposition conference?

[Husayn] There is no talk about any dates or any opposition. However, the Iraqi opposition has met in other Arab capitals, and it holds meetings constantly. All our talk actually stems from the pain and fear for Iraq concerning the current and future situation unless the Iraqis converge on their destiny and on addressing this issue.

[AL-WASAT] When was your first meeting with Yitzhaq Rabin?

[Husayn] The first meeting with Rabin was held shortly before the 1974 Rabat summit.

[AL-WASAT] Where?

[Husayn] Details on all these meetings and their contents will come soon and will be published.

[AL-WASAT] After 43 years in office, what was the most serious phase? Was it the addressing of war or the addressing of peace?

[Husayn] From an Arab viewpoint, I believe that it was the addressing of war that led to all that we have thus far reached in terms of the negative reflection on the Arab interest. In other words, actions stemming from emotions and departing from reason and controlled behavior have reflected negatively on the Arab interest.

No doubt, the past record is terrible in terms of the catastrophes that befell this nation as a result of these policies. I believe that peace will provide this people with all opportunities to reach a level at which they will feel they are not threatened. This is so because it is a matter of time, so we should race with time in order to give the Arab man all that was obtained by others. At that time, there will be no fears, and the future will be promising, God willing.

[AL-WASAT] How real are the fears for the peace camp regarding the growing extremism in the region?

[Husayn] Fears are no more or less than before. I, however, believe that the Arab man is mature and that the peace march is proving this fact. I also believe that there is a state of boredom, unjustified extremism, pessimism, and isolationism, something which is natural. Personally, I am optimistic.

[AL-WASAT] Is there any plan for a cabinet reshuffle in Jordan?

[Husayn] There is no such plan before we pass through the budget phase. After that, we will see how things proceed.

'Text' of Iraqi Opposition Letter to King

JN2312115095 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic
25 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received a letter signed by many Iraqi opposition figures in which they value his majesty's stance toward the Iraqi people and voice absolute support for his majesty's frank positions.

The following is the text of the letter:

Your Majesty King Husayn, may God watch over you. God's peace and blessings be upon you,

We, along with our people, have been following with extreme interest your positions in support of the Iraqi people, who are suffering an ordeal, as well as your constant assertion about your eagerness to put an end to this suffering. You have also called for setting up a democratic, pluralistic system in Iraq under which human rights are respected. In addition, you have hosted a large number of our people and several officials.

While welcoming and fully supporting your positions, we would like to express — from a brotherly and cordial position dictated by our national responsibility toward our people and country — our opinion of your call for dialogue and national reconciliation among what your majesty termed as the "basic components of the Iraqi people," by drafting a new constitution that takes into consideration the ambitions of these components. You defined these components as "Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds."

Your majesty is definitely aware that the Iraqi people are not composed of these three components alone. The Iraqi people also have Turkmen, Assyrians, Christians, Sabians, Yezidis, and Armenians. However, Iraq's modern history has not witnessed any disputes or conflicts among these components so as to justify calling on them to achieve reconciliation. Reconciliation is sought between warring groups. History bears witness that this does not exist among the components of the Iraqi people.

This clearly means that the crisis of the regime in Iraq is basically a political one and not an ethnic and sectarian crisis even though it sometimes appears to be something else. This requires a political solution to the crisis based on the promulgation of an equitable and balanced constitution that guarantees justice and equal rights and duties for all Iraqi citizens.

Also, your majesty is well aware that the national, sectarian, and ethnic configuration of the Iraqi people is not only a characteristic of the Iraqi people and Iraq but can be found in many countries where all sides coexist under a canopy of one state and one political entity based on general national principles and foundations by which all abide.

From this premise, we hope that your majesty will dissipate the anxieties that beset the sons of our people and all the Iraqi nationalists who are concerned about the unity of Iraq and its people, a concern you most probably share.

Concluding, we would like to refer to recent reports that the Jordanian leadership intends to convene a general meeting of the Iraqi opposition in Amman in the immediate future to discuss the question of changes in Iraq in light of the concepts that your majesty and the Jordanian leadership have in this respect.

From the premise of our national responsibility and our eagerness to render this meeting a success, we propose the formation of a committee of Iraqi figures known for their honesty, patriotism, Iraqi affiliation, and concern about the unity of Iraq and its people and who can very well prepare for this meeting and render it a success to achieve the following:

a. To determine the representatives of the Iraqi opposition factions and parties who will be invited to attend this meeting as well as their number.

b. To set the meeting's agenda to one main topic; the discussion of a mechanism and political, nonpolitical, and media means to help bring about the changes.

c. To formulate general concepts and principles to follow and to leave discussion of important and sensitive national issues for the Iraqi people to decide through an elected parliament.

Therefore, we hope that your majesty will read this memorandum and give it the necessary attention. We are very confident that the constructive positive dialogue and our sincere action for the benefit of Jordan and Iraq and their peoples will help expedite the achievement of the desired change on nationalistic basis that can preserve the unity of Iraq and its people.

Peace and blessing of God be upon you.

The letter was signed by:

Ahmad al-Habbubi, from the Democratic Pan-Arab Grouping in Iraq,
Muhammad al-Alusi, the Islamic Bloc in Iraq,
Dr. Tariq Shafiq, an expert in oil affairs,
Sayyid Malik al-Yasiri, a businessman
Major General Kamal Mustafa, a retired major general,
Muhammad al-Badri, a university professor,
Ahmad 'Abd-al-Fattah, an engineer,
Dr. Sa'dun al-Dulaymi, a university professor,
Sayyid Mahdi al-Naqib, a participant in the 1991 uprising,
Shaykh Husayn Al Ribat, a tribal chief and participant in the 1991 uprising,
Sayyid Qaysar Wattut, an engineer and participant in the 1991 uprising,
Sayyid Hamad Abu-Tabikh, participant in the 1991 uprising,
Dr. Husayn al-Juburi, a university professor from the Iraqi National Grouping,
Dr. 'Abbas Mahdi, a university professor from the Union of Iraqi Independents,
Dr. Razzaq Jabr, a specialist doctor,
Ibrahim al-Zubaydi, writer and journalist
Jawhar Husayn al-Suraji, the Society of Kurdish Tribes,
'Aziz Qadir Samanji, the Turkmen Democratic Movement,
Dr. Usamah al-Tikriti, the Iraqi Islamic Party,
Basim al-A'zami, the Iraqi Islamic party,
'Ali Husayn Jasim, a retired officer,

Dr. Sarjun Dayshu, the Assyrian National Congress,
Sayyid Kazim Kammunah, a former secondary school headmaster,
Dr. Zaki al-Sarraf, a university professor,
Ma'n Maksad al-Jaryan, businessman,
'Abd-al-Halim al-Ruhaymi, writer and journalist,
Sa'd Salih Jabr, from the Free Iraq Council.

Commentary Supports King's 'Initiative' on Iraq

JN2312101795 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 Dec 95 p 6

[Commentary by Dr. Musa al-Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Majesty King Husayn's remarks on Iraq two days ago reflected the worries of many Jordanians, who see the widespread suffering and miseries of many Iraqis who are scared of a bloodbath or a civil war if the regime in Baghdad is challenged.

The talk about a bloodbath resulting from a civil war between Iraqi Kurds and Arabs or Shiite and Sunnis might well be a ploy used by the Iraqi ministry of information to neutralise the attempts by Iraqi nationals to take a daring step to topple the regime or to introduce a new political system where Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiite can enjoy their rights as equal citizens in democratic pluralistic society. On the other hand, its occurrence is a possibility that cannot be ruled out. A meeting of Iraqi opposition groups and political figures would send a message to certain Iraqi nationals inside Iraq that they can carry out the changes they feel required without being scared since the opposition groups will agree to a minimum common denominator of priorities.

Such an initiative will neutralise the danger of the 70,000-man Badr forces stationed in Tehran, composed of former Iraqi prisoners of war captured during the first Gulf war, and staffed by Iranian command officers.

Those Badr forces, as it was revealed recently, have Iranian tanks and sophisticated anti-tank missiles as part of their equipment. The first contingent has already reached the Iraqi northern border in case they invade Karkuk or Mosul, that would guarantee an Iranian hegemony in the area for ages to come.

Though there are over 47 different opposition groups operating from Tehran, Damascus, Saudi Arabia, Cairo, and Lebanon, the main strong ones are al-Da'wah Party representing many Shiite and still in control of many areas around al-Basrah and in the Marshes, the Kurdish opposition headed by Jalal Talabani and Mas'ud Barzani, and some less strong parties and independent personalities who have their significance as representatives of a strong national movement.

A common agenda between those numerous groups can be found if Jordan plays a role in bringing them to Amman to start a dialogue to reach a formula which all would accept and endorse.

Such a formula will be the real message to be sent to many Iraqis who are at the moment inside Iraq and who have actually the desire and the capability to effect the drastic changes required.

There are positive signals that Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim has agreed to send his envoy Hamid al-Bayyati as a representative of al- Da'wah Party to the Amman conference which, according to some sources, could take place on 6 January.

Moreover, another signal came from Damascus when the former head of Iraqi military intelligence, Wafiq al-Samarra'i, agreed to be one of the main participants in Amman along with 82 london-based Iraqi figures and heads of opposition groups including very prominent names like Majid al-Kho'i, Sa'd Salih Jabir, Mish'an al-Juburi, Nabil al-Jinabi, and Ahmad al-Hububi.

One of the salient points in Jordan's call is that it does not pre-impose a form of political system on Iraqis to live by.

The King was clear that it is up to the Iraqis to choose a federation, or a confederation, or a centralised authority as long as the integrity of Iraqi land and its sovereignty is maintained.

Moreover, Jordan is motivated to launch this initiative by its concern for the Iraqi people and their sufferings. Other players in the area do not have the same honest motive.

Some players are obsessed by their Arab irredentist party and its ideological fervour to annex and unite by force.

Others are worried about their annual quota of oil exports and how much financial loss lifting the sanctions on Iraq will cost them, which is in the range of $6 billion or $8 billion. While the Iranian player has always defended the notion that existing Arab states should be subsumed in a Tehran based Islamic empire. [as published] Iraq and Arab nationalism have no legitimacy in Iran's Islamic ideology.

Furthermore, an appeal from Amman to the Iraqis carries more weight of credibility and acceptance of friendship due to Jordan's former stand with the Iraqi people during the last two Gulf wars.

There was a chance to change the regime in Baghdad when President Saddam Husayn was at his weakest point in March-April 1991. But he survived due to three factors mainly: the Sunni community's fear of retribution if the regime fell, the elite's solidarity, and the opposition's divisions. Moreover, during the Iraqi Shiite revolt in February 1991, Washington suddenly supported President Saddam out of fear from fundamentalist takeover, which will be pro-Iranian.

King Husayn's initiative will guarantee that the same three factors which worked adversely before will be handled in a positive way: The Sunnis will not fear retribution, the elite's solidarity will be positive with Brigadier General Husayn Kamil in Amman, and the opposition will have a common agenda for a constitutional pluralistic democratic Iraq.

It is in the interest of all parties in the area to maintain a united Iraq. Its geopolitical weight will always be considerable since the country enjoys a combination of large oil reserves, population and skilled work force.

Paper Views King's Speech, Iraqi Conditions

JN2312110795 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic
23 Dec 95 p 29

[Editorial: "Iraq in King Husayn's Statements"]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn's insistence on talking in detail about what everybody calls the Iraqi state of affairs did not come as a surprise to any political observer. This is because the crisis has persisted for a long time now and the tragic results began to surface, both in terms of the individual's living conditions inside Iraq and the growing foreign designs against that fraternal state. These designs seek to entrench the current state of division, which is practically prevailing in Iraq, in order to prevent its action and ability to formulate the future of this region, considering the great resources and abilities it can posses when it resumes its geographic cohesion under the umbrella of a strong and effective national unity.

Certainly, and by all standards, the Jordanian concern about the domestic situation in fraternal Iraq cannot be considered an intervention in its domestic affairs. Nor can it be said that this concern reflects a desire to control events or a trend that serves Jordanian political objectives. This concern emanates from the state of reciprocal influence between two neighboring, sisterly states, the serious events in each will inevitably affect their neighbors. So how would be the case when the events are as tremendous as those that are taking place in the neighboring Iraq; and when there are dangerous effects against the structure of the Iraqi society and against its future in the light of the international changes, the uni-polar supremacy, and the re-drawing of geographic boundaries in most countries in a way that suits the interests of the major powers and the period of calm that the new world order, which was shaped in the past decade, is seeking to achieve.

Jordan, on all levels, has always viewed Iraq as its strategic depth and the country on which it relies for support in the times of adversity. Also, it has always considered itself the lung through which the Iraqi people can breath when all doors are closed in their face. The king's recent statements came to strengthen these convictions and positions. They were based on Jordan's role as an inheritor of the Great Arab Revolt's banners and objectives; on a deep understanding of Jordan's geographic location, which makes it imperative for it to be influenced by and to influence its surroundings; and on the belief that ignoring a certain problem will not help resolve it, but may rather complicate it and increase its negative effects.

When we call for a national Iraqi dialogue, in which everybody can participate, we do not seek to deprive the others of their role in shaping the future of their country in a way that agrees with their aspirations and hopes. But we seek, within the context of the current realities on the ground, to unite ranks, not to divide them in order to enable everybody at the end to reunite the Iraqi homeland before it is fragmented under the current conditions and to provide the opportunity for the future generations to build their secure, united, strong Iraq, which can provide decent life for them. This is the only alternative we wish for them.

Delegation Leaves for Iraq To Sign Oil Agreement

JN2412122095 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
24 Dec 95 p 25

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman-Petra—Ahmad Bashir, secretary general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, left Amman for Baghdad today at the head of an official delegation that includes representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Jordanian Oil refinery, and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. The delegation will hold talks with Iraqi officials on meeting Jordan's crude oil and derivatives needs for 1996, and will sign an agreement in this regard.

Sources from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources estimate Jordan's oil needs for 1996 to be 4.5 million tons.

To Buy 3.1 Million Tonnes

NC2512123995 Paris AFP in English
1150 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, Dec 25 (AFP)—A delegation from the Jordanian energy ministry left here Monday [25 December] for Baghdad to negotiate a deal to buy extra Iraqi oil to cover its 1996 fuel needs, officials said.

The delegation, headed by the ministry's secretary general Ahmad Bashir, will finalise an accord to buy 3.1 million tonnes of oil, five percent more than in 1995, as well as quantities of fuel and gas from the Iraqis.

Iraq is the only supplier of oil to Jordan, providing for 70,000 barrels per day.

The 1996 deal will be transported to Jordan by a fleet of 2,000 tankers and is supplied under a UN exemption to the oil embargo imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

U.S. Defense Secretary Perry To Visit Early Jan

JN2312093895 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 23 Dec 95 p 29

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-RA'Y — Informed sources told AL-RA'Y that U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry will pay an official visit to Jordan in early January for talks with top Jordanian officials. During the visit, which is expected to last three days, Perry will discuss U.S. military assistance to Jordan to modernize the Armed Forces.

The sources added that supplying the Jordanian Air Force with F-16 warplanes, in addition to some light and heavy vehicles, will top the agenda of the talks. The two sides are also expected to discuss a possible intensification of joint exercises and maneuvers.

Several U.S. military commanders visited Jordan over the past three months to assess the situation of the Armed Forces and ways to modernize them in line with Jordan's strategy in this respect.

Reportage on Military Activities in South

Israeli Shelling, Hizballah Attack

NC2612074595 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Report by Samir 'Alamah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The occupation forces have kept up their aggressive acts against the southern areas adjacent to the occupied strip. The occupation artillery in Tallusah, al-Tayyibah project, and Muhaybib bombarded the outskirts of Qabrikha, Wadi al-Saluqi, and the area of al-Samiriyah with 105-mm, 120-mm and 150-mm caliber shells around 0700 this morning. This was accompanied by raking operations with 12.7-mm machine guns. Meanwhile, enemy helicopters were flying over the area.

Israeli gunboats also patrolled the coast off al-Bayyadah and fired machine guns from the sea.

In retaliation for the repeated attacks against the safe areas, the fire support unit of the Islamic Resistance bombarded the al-Qantarah position, scoring direct hits and destroying a number of its fortifications.

Security sources this morning reported a Resistance attack with rockets and mortars against al-Qantarah position, which sustained direct hits. The attack is the second in 24 hours. The Resistance attacked the same position yesterday with rockets and machine guns. [passage omitted]

2 Children Wounded, 1 Killed

NC2612101695 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The area surrounding the South Lebanese Army's al-Qantarah position came under artillery bombardment from terrorists positions in Qabrikha this morning. The bombardment caused no injuries. The South Lebanese Army artillery immediately returned fire and silenced it.

The saboteurs kept up their aggression against civilians in the border zone. Less than a day after the murder of farmer Butrus Butrus from Anan, Qada' Jazzin, during a bombardment by Hizballah artillery, three children were wounded in a strong explosion yesterday afternoon as they were playing in the al-Nabi 'Uwaydah area east of al-Tayyibah.

Our military correspondent reports that soldiers of the South Lebanese Army rushed to the scene of the explosion and moved the wounded children to the Marj 'Uyun hospital, where one child died.

Our correspondent added that nobody has yet to claim responsibility for the crime. However, security sources in the area point a finger at the sabotage organization, Hizballah, which pursues that lowly approach of killing without discrimination between fighters and civilians or between men and children.

Israelis Shell Barracks

NC2612093095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces artillery stationed in al-Zaffatah renewed the bombardment of the deserted Lebanese Army barracks in al-Nabatiyah around 1000 this morning. A number of shells landed in the area surrounding the barracks. The bombardment reached the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa.

The same area came under concentrated bombardment around 0900 today. The bombardment caused material damage only.

Agent Antoine Lahd [South Lebanese Army] militia has admitted that one of its positions in al-Qantarah came under attack by the Resistance this morning. According to sources in the militia, the attack caused no injuries. The Islamic Resistance later claimed responsibility for the attack, pointing out in a statement that the fire support unit targeted the position with concentrated artillery fire and scored direct hits.

3 Israeli Troops Killed

NC2612125895 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hizballah has announced that a resistance group attacked a Merkava tank at the entrance of the al-Dabshah position with rockets at 0900 today. The tank was destroyed and three Israeli soldiers were killed.

Hizballah said that another resistance group attacked the al-Dabshah position and fired on the Israeli troops who were evacuating the bodies of the dead. Hizballah said the resistance fighters scored direct hits.

A third resistance group attacked the Israeli post in 'Ali al-Tahir. [passage omitted]

Israel Reports No Casualties

TA2612131895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amal attacked IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] positions in al-Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir this morning. An IDF vehicle was slightly damaged by fire, but our troops did not sustain any casualties. In response, the IDF shelled an abandoned Lebanese Army base in al-Nabatiyah used by the terrorists.

Chief Negotiator on 'Flexibility' Instructions

NC2712130095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1225 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 27 Dec (MENA)—Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim, the head of the Syrian delegation to negotiations with Israel, has said that the Syrian leadership has strategically opted for peace in line with the equation of full withdrawal for full peace.

In remarks in Washington published today by the Lebanese newspaper AL-SAFIR, al-Mu'allim pointed out that some regional states are optimistic about making progress in these negotiations. He expressed the hope that this optimism will not be disappointed by the end of the talks.

Al-Mu'allim said the Syrian delegation is coming to these talks with an open mind and with clear instructions from the Syrian leadership to defend our fixed position and show flexibility in a manner that does not undermine these fixed positions and rights.

He added: We are prepared to contribute to a peace agreement on the basis of building upon what we have achieved over four years of negotiations with the goal of arriving at a peace agreement between Syria and Israel as part of a just and all-embracing settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338.

Press: U.S. Talks Will Reveal Israeli Stance

JN2612084695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Big Wager," the newspaper TISHRIN says: Everyone inside and outside Israel now knows that Syria considers full Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines as the basic gateway to peace.

The paper adds: The Israeli officials have thus far been content to talk about paying a full price in the Golan, making painful concessions, and linking the depth of withdrawal to the depth of peace, as well as uttering other expressions which can be interpreted in various ways.

TISHRIN continues: What is wanted now is an open and official commitment to full withdrawal in accordance with the Security Council resolutions, the substance of the U.S. initiative, and Syria's right to regain its occupied territory. Had the Israeli officials shown their absolute readiness to return the entire Golan to Syria, they would have definitely saved time and effort and pushed the region toward a comprehensive peace. This is because Syria has long openly shown its readiness for full peace in return for full withdrawal.

TISHRIN adds: Knowing that the southern Lebanese issue worries Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, the promotion of the peace process on the Syrian track will also promote the peace process on the Lebanese track.

The paper highlights President Hafiz al-Asad's assertion in Cairo that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks are closely linked, and that Syrian-Lebanese coordination will continue, so the steps which will be taken will be parallel [mutawaziyah] for the interest of both countries in a way that serves the objective of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: What is required of Israel is full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon as well as activation of the resolutions of international legitimacy. Syria and Lebanon are ready for security arrangements which do not harm sovereignty and hold no trace of occupation. Such arrangements will also provide equitable [mutakafi'] security for all. Thus the wager on the Washington talks is really a big one, because comprehensive peace depends on the success of these talks, which will start tomorrow.

Under the headline "Land Is the Basis of Peace," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Syria has provided everything possible to achieve the required progress in order to render the peace process a success. At the same time, however, Syria adopts the cause-and-effect principle. This means that if the new opportunity provided by the resumption of peace talks is to bear fruit, the Israeli side must translate words into deeds. In other words, Israel should respond to the requirements of real peace. These requirements are now crystal-clear, pinpointed, and devoid of any complications. They are represented by implementing the land-for-peace principle which was reemphasized by President Hafiz al-Asad in Cairo on Saturday [23 December]. He said: If peace is to be established, land will be its basis.

AL-BA'TH adds that the question now is: Will Israel abandon its prior policies and join the talks this time with seriousness about providing the background required for making a breakthrough that will achieve practical steps forward in order to bring about a just and comprehensive peace?

The paper says: It is still very difficult to predict anything. However, the coming talks near Washington will reveal the true Israeli position. Substance is still the most important thing. By this we mean commitment to full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines and withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 425.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: We believe that there is now a new opportunity to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. However, if Israel reverts to its former positions on the peace process, it should undoubtedly bear full responsibility for the failure to make the breakthrough required to achieve the aspired and set objectives of the peace process on the basis of the U.S. initiative and the Madrid conference.

Commentary: Intentions Alone Cannot Make Peace

JN2612171195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1233 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: With the sponsorship and participation of the United States, Syrian-Israeli talks will commence tomorrow amid an atmosphere of cautious optimism. Although exploratory, the talks are extremely important, given their impact on the peace process in the region. Without Syria there will be no comprehensive peace. Progress on the Syrian track will be followed by progress on the Lebanese track. This progress will boost the entire peace process.

Therefore, the wager is great and international circles are awaiting the results with great interest. In fact, the elements of the solution have become known after four years of negotiations, stumbling, and stagnation. Syria, as is known, adheres to Israel's full withdrawal beyond 4 June 1967 lines in implementation of the Security Council resolutions, the essence of the U.S. initiative, and the right of people's to restore their occupied lands.

Throughout the past years, Syria announced that there will never be any bargaining on the Golan or relinquishment of a grain of its soil. It also announced that it backs a complete peace in return for complete withdrawal. The new Israeli Government, headed by Shim'on Peres, hinted that it will pay the full price in the Golan in return for peace, while the former government used to talk about a partial withdrawal. Although the phrase "full price" is not clear, the Israelis should have understood following the failure of the previous talks that Syria will never budge a single inch from its right to the restoration of all the Golan and the repatriation of its displaced people.

Since the 27 December talks will center on working out a framework of understanding, acknowledging the principle of full withdrawal is extremely important, given it is the real gateway to durable and solid peace.

His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad was all the more clear when he said in Cairo, following his talks with President Mubarak, that who wants to keep the land of others, does not, in fact, want peace. The imminent talks are a real test for Israel. Intentions alone cannot make peace. Statements should be translated into actions. Syria as well as the Arabs and the international community are waiting for actions. No one in the world casts doubt on Syria's sincere endeavor to make peace and response to the international community's desire to establish a well-founded peace in the Middle East that would enhance world peace and stave off the dangers of wars and conflicts from this region.

The Arabs explicitly announced that they link their positions on peace with Israel's withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres did not depart from reality when he said that peace with Syria means peace with all the Arabs. Syria has devoted itself to just Arab causes. It has spared no sacrifice or effort for the sake of supporting the Arab right and preserving the Arab dignity. It still adheres to this stand.

Accordingly, the peace process can make tangible progress in as much as Israel responds to the requirements of peace, particularly full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. If security arrangements are to dissipate the Israelis' fears, then Syria expressed its readiness a long time ago to institute parallel and equitable [mutawaziyah wa mutakafi'ah] security arrangements that do not violate sovereignty and leave no trace of occupation. However, it should be born in mind that a just and comprehensive peace is the sure guarantee for peace and stability in the region.

Radio Lauds Cairo Summit 'Pan-Arab Achievement'

JN2412192395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1237 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The continuation of top-level Syrian-Egyptian coordination as a constant policy at this particular time in which the Arabs are scattered and divided is, in itself, a national and pan-Arab achievement.

This is because both Syria, with its location, position, and great leader, and Egypt, the big sister, with its role, history, and presence, constitute the major basis for any Arab action and for any position linked to the Arab nation's present and future.

No war can be waged without Egypt. Likewise, peace cannot be achieved without Syria. This has been proved by history and entrenched by geography and facts. The importance of the Syrian-Egyptian summit held in Cairo yesterday stems from the region's circumstances, from the developments of the peace process, and from

Syria's crystal-clear position, which has constantly been reiterated by Arabs and the world, as well as from all these circumstances and developments.

The Saudi foreign minister joined the Cairo summit, which brought to mind the Alexandria summit held by Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak and His Majesty King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. The Alexandria summit angered the Arab nation's enemies, who were deprived of sleep due to the fact that the Arabs are capable of meeting, coordination, and consultations. The enemies do not want these things to take place.

Everything was clear and open, so there was no cover for any fact or any position. As we understand it under these circumstances, a comprehensive peace can be established when Syria and Lebanon sign a peace agreement in a way that achieves their interest, and whereby none of the Arabs will abandon other Arabs who have gone their own way. We are proceeding within the framework of the bases we have worked out for ourselves. We will not abandon these bases, despite our knowledge that some brothers have departed from them.

Syria's consistent position on the principles and bases of the peace process not only serves Syria's present and future interest and its right to regain its own territory, but also serves the interest of the Palestinian people and that of the states directly concerned with the peace process. Syria's consistent position consequently serves the Arab nation's interest, because the peace which will ultimately be achieved will not be between Syria or Egypt, but will be a pan-Arab peace which serves the interest of the Arab nation and the region.

We say that getting closer to, or coordinating with, the Syrian position is an action that serves the Arab nation's interest. Failure to do so will not serve the nation's interest. This was confirmed by the experience of others on various levels and in several places. The best proof of this fact is the Egyptian coordination with Syria despite the fact that Egypt has gone its own way in this regard. From this premise, the Syrian-Egyptian summit held in Cairo yesterday is an important juncture in joint Arab action and in the multifaceted coordination in order to enhance the nation's interests, defend its rights, and preserve its dignity. President Hafiz al-Asad has been, and continues to be, eager to achieve these objectives after 25 years of leading the pan-Arab struggle. This reflects the leader's appreciation of the causes of his people and nation. There is no rest for a fighter, and there is no pause or hesitation for a struggler, especially in the battle for a just peace.

Al-Asad Receives Yemeni President's Message

JN2412135695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Yahya al-Mutawakkil, special envoy of Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, at 1215 today at al-Rawdah Palace. Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, attended.

Al-Mutawakkil conveyed to the president a message from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

More on Meeting With Yemeni Envoy

JN2412182395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Yahya al-Mutawakkil, personal envoy of Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, at the al-Rawdah Palace at 1245 today. The meeting was attended by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs.

Al-Mutawakkil conveyed to the president a message from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

Talks dealt with the situation in the Red Sea and the current dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

Afghanistan

Taleban Rockets Hit Libyan Embassy in Kabul

*LD2712080795 Tehran IRNA in English
0718 GMT 27 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 27, IRNA — The Afghan capital of Kabul on Tuesday once again was the target of Katyusha missiles and artillery attacks of the Taleban.

An Afghan Defense Ministry source said Tuesday night that at least eight Katyusha rockets were fired from the Taleban-controlled southern region of Kabul on central Kabul, destroying two houses. He added that the shellings caused no casualties.

At least two rockets hit the Libyan embassy compound in Vazir-Akbar Khan District.

The government sources said that the Taleban militiamen in the past three weeks have kept the besieged Afghan capital under their continuous fire, killing or wounding hundreds of people and destroying many houses.

Government Aircraft Shot Down Near Kabul

*LD2312152495 (Clandestine) Radio Message of
Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 23 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] A warplane of Rabbani's coalition administration was shot down yesterday over the Dar ol Aman region.

According to reports from Kabul, a jet warplane of the Kabul administration was shot down yesterday over the Dar ol Aman area while bombing the Taleban group's positions in Chahar Asiab district and in Mohammad Aghah district, Lowgar Province. No information is yet available on the fate of the pilot.

Government Hands Over Tajik Rebels to Tajikistan

*LD2712112995 (Clandestine) Radio Message of
Freedom in Dari to Afghanistan 0345 GMT 27 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] One of Tajikistan's mojahedin commanders, Commander (Dodullah), and seven of his mojahedin have been handed over to the communist state of Tajikistan by Commander (Eshan Borhan). A Hezb-e Eslami source in Konduz Province told a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent in a radio contact that following the signing of an agreement between the Kabul government and the Government of Tajikistan, (Eshan Borhan), a commander of the Nozzar [Supervisory Council] in the Rama area of Darvaz, recently detained Commander (Dodullah), one of the commanders of Tajikistan's mojahedin, and seven of his mojahedin in Darvaz and handed them over to the communist state of Tajikistan.

It should be mentioned that this kind of anti-Islamic action against Tajik mojahedin brothers has been taking place repeatedly in Badakhshan and Takhar Provinces.

Hezb-e Eslami Condoles Over Peshawar Bomb

*LD2312171595 (Clandestine) Radio Message of
Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 23 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] In a message sent to Pakistan concerning the bomb explosion in the Sadr area of Peshawar city, killing 65 and wounding dozens of people, the head office of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Afghanistan has expressed its profound sorrow.

The message states: The Muslim and Mojahed people of Afghanistan shares the pain of every disaster and difficulty with the government and Muslim nation of Pakistan.

The message further says: The head office of the Hezb-e Eslami of Afghanistan asks Almighty God to bestow patience to the bereaved families, and wishes the authorities success in arresting the perpetrators of this crime.

Khalili Prisoners Released as Goodwill Measure

*LD2512203095 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network
in Dari 1600 GMT 25 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] The Khalili faction's 21 prisoners of war were unilaterally released today. An Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Revolutionary Movement] source told BAKHTAR that the POW's were released unilaterally as a goodwill gesture. Previously 49 POW's of Khalili faction were released in two groups. The Harakat-e Eslami source said that the process of releasing POW's continued and some more of them would be released in the near future.

Suspected Pakistani Spy Arrested in Kabul

*LD2312173295 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network
in Pashto 1530 GMT 23 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] A Pakistani citizen, accused of espionage, has recently been captured in Kabul City. Bakhtar reports to us that Hafez Mohammad, son of Gol Mohammad, who was involved in espionage for some time in the city of Kabul, has been arrested by the Security Unit of the National Security and has been handed over to law enforcement organs.

Foreign Minister Accuses Pakistan of Interference

LD2512180895 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The international community should speed up the peace process in Afghanistan by bringing pressure to bear on foreign interfering circles. This point has been raised by Abdorrahim Ghafurzai in his speech to the UN General Assembly. In his speech he said that the real causes of the war and bloodshed are nurtured outside Afghanistan and Pakistani rulers are backing them. He describes the visit of Pakistan's Foreign Minister to Mazar-e Sharif, the installation of communication networks in Kandahar and Herat, the transfer of Pakistan's embassy to Jalalabad and the supply of weapons and capabilities to the Taleban as instances of Pakistan's interference. He called them against all international norms and the United Nations charter and interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

In his speech he thanked Butrus-Ghali and Mahmoud Mestiri for the efforts they are making to restore peace in Afghanistan. He also noted the shortcomings in the work of UN's special mission to Afghanistan which are the lack of pinpointing the real cause of the continuation of fighting and of taking effective measures to end the war and not disclosing the real identity of the Taleban.

At the end of his speech the deputy foreign minister of Afghanistan said that his country wanted the restoration of friendly relations with Pakistan on the basis of mutual respect for the territorial integrity of the countries and non-interference in each others internal affairs.

Weekly on Iran's 'Principled' Stance

LD2512161395 Tehran IRNA in English 1601 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA — The stance adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran towards Afghanistan and the solutions it has offered to the Afghan plight regard have been principled and based on religious criteria, an Afghan weekly reported.

Kabul-based weekly 'PAMIR' in its latest issue added that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always defended Afghanistan against conspiracies hatched against that country.

The weekly also said that the Afghan Government will continue to hold talks with opposition groups including the National Islamic Movement, the Islamic Unity Party and the Golboddin Hekmatyar's Islamic Party.

In conclusion 'PAMIR' commented that undoubtedly the role played by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Alaeddin Boroujerdi has been of high importance in promoting the peace talks.

Regime Said To Depend on Foreign Aid

LD2412200495 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Lafra'i said he was able to include foreign interference in Afghanistan in the conference's statement. It is also said in the statement that the real cause of the Afghan crisis and the continuation of fighting is foreign interference, the immediate cessation of which was demanded by the conference. He said: Although no country has been named in the conference statement, everyone knows that country is Pakistan.

Lafra'i's remarks were interesting because he pointed out all those instances which his party and his coalition partners have perpetrated. Although Lafra'i is happy at the condemnation of foreign interference in Afghanistan and called for its immediate cessation, he should recall the fact that now not only the Islamic world but the whole world thinks that the Kabul regime is a regime that is dependent on foreign interference, a regime whose president was appointed in Pakistan by its intelligence, and whose minister of defense [Mas'ud] was also appointed by Pakistan's intelligence services, a regime that owes its existence to the direct assistance of the KGB [former USSR's Committee for State Security] and to India's RAW [Research and Analysis Wing]. [passage omitted]

Central Bank To Establish Trade Offices in Iran

LD2312113895 Tehran IRNA in English 1053 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 23, IRNA — Afghanistan's Central Bank is to set up representative offices in the Iranian cities of Mashhad (Khorasan Province) and Bandar Abbas (Hormozgan Province) to offer commercial facilities to Afghan traders active in Iran.

A report released by the press bureau of the office of the Afghan premier on Friday stated the decision for setting up the offices was made during a meeting on Thursday of the Bank Supreme Council, chaired by the head of the office of the premier, Ahmadshah Ahmadzi.

The governor of the Central Bank of Afghanistan, Abdolqadir Fetrat, expressed hope that Tehran-Kabul relations would further expand following the inauguration of the bank's branches in the two Iranian cities and that more goods would be imported into Afghanistan.

He also hoped for the widening of commercial ties between Afghanistan and other countries, including Iran, and the expansion of economic activities in his country after the cessation of war and the restoration of transport security.

Bangladesh

Campaign Launched To Recover Illegal Arms

BK2112160395 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A coordinated campaign has been launched nationwide to recover illegal arms and explosives. The campaign has been started with a view to maintaining a conducive law and order situation during the coming parliamentary elections.

According to information received from the Election Commission's law and order coordination cell, law enforcement agencies, during a campaign from midnight last night to 1200 at noon today, have recovered 83 firearms, 74 cartridges, and 20 explosives. A Home Ministry press release said that during the same period, 640 persons have been arrested on charges of possession of illegal firearms and other offenses. A meeting in Dhaka today presided over by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury reviewed the comprehensive arms recovery program and its progress.

Arms, Explosives Found

BK2212160895 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of the countrywide campaign to recover illegal arms, police have seized another 45 firearms, 143 rounds of ammunition, and 48 powerful bombs. A Dhaka Metropolitan Police press release said that the intelligence branch of the police recovered six firearms, spare parts of equipment for making weapons, 85 rounds of ammunition, and 35 powerful bombs and arrested 12 people. Over the past two days in Narayanganj, police seized 21 firearms, 12 grenades, and 32 rounds of ammunition. In Khulna, police recovered eight firearms, 11 rounds of bullets, and other deadly weapons from six police station areas yesterday. In the Khulna metropolitan area, police are conducting body searches at many places and police patrols around town, especially in crime- ridden areas, have intensified. In Kushtia, 19 persons surrendered firearms and ammunition to the police. These include six shutter [as heard] guns, one gun, one pistol, two revolvers, one hand grenade, 17 rifle cartridges, and nine gun cartridges.

More Arms Seized

BK2312111095 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the second day of the countrywide drive to recover illegal arms, the law enforcing agencies yesterday recovered 87 more firearms, 179 bullets, 78 cartridges, 19 spares of various arms, and 546 explosives of different kinds from various parts of the country. The police arrested 654 persons, miscreants, and terrorists for keeping illegal arms and [on] other charges.

Zia Not To Resign Until Political Crisis Ends

BK2512085895 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 19 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Nazmul Ashraf]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister [PM] Begum Khaleda Zia is firm not to resign unless the lingering political crisis is resolved through dialogue with the Opposition.

Begum Zia conveyed her firmness to some of her cabinet colleagues after the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday at the Bangabhaban [President House], an influential minister said.

The minister, who preferred anonymity, told THE DAILY STAR the PM was unhappy that the current backstage parleys between the ruling party and the opposition parties yielded no result till now.

The minister quoted the PM and BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] chief as asking the party negotiators why should she resign if there was no negotiated settlement.

Other sources in the BNP said the party had toughened its stand on the PM's resignation issue.

In case of the Opposition's continued rejection of any move to end the crisis before the PM steps down, the sources added, the ruling party would follow the Constitution as regards the PM's resignation and holding of the elections.

Meanwhile, the process of behind-the-scene negotiation between the government and the opposition parties had slowed down as the negotiators of both the sides feel they've got more time to bargain for their respective positions — the BNP seeking to settle all issues relating to the polls before the PM resigns and the Opposition demanding the PM's immediate resignation.

Asked on the issue, BNP Secretary General and LGRD [Local Government and Rural Development] minister

Abdus Salam Talukdar told some reporters at his Bailey Road official residence last night that the process was still on.

The Opposition leaders seemed discouraged after AL [Awami League] Chief Sheikh Hasina spoke against the personal level contacts, he added.

"We'll continue our efforts to resolve the crisis through dialogue despite their refusal to comply with our request", he said.

On the PM's resignation, the BNP Secretary General said, "Even if the Prime Minister desires, she cannot resign unless a negotiation (about her successor) takes place. She is under oath to uphold the Constitution. She can't create any constitutional vacuum ... If she resigns, there will be no government and the country can't be run without a government" .

The BNP leader brushed aside a press report which said his party had made a new proposal to the Opposition that the PM would resign 45 days before the polls.

Meeting Held To Discuss Order During Election

BK2512023895 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Election Commission held a meeting in Dhaka today with the Home Ministry, armed forces, and law enforcement forces to discuss the maintenance of a conducive law and order situation during the coming parliamentary elections. The meeting was presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque. It decided to maintain the laws and regulations formulated during the 1991 parliamentary elections and to formulate new ones if necessary. Armed forces will be deployed at the police station and district levels to recover illegal weapons and maintain law and order. The law and order coordination cell set up at the Election Commission Secretariat will include one representative from each of the armed forces.

During the meeting, the chief election commissioner expressed satisfaction over the large seizure of arms by law enforcement forces, who had launched a campaign in different areas of the country over the past three days. He requested those concerned to further intensify the campaign. Meanwhile, on the fourth day of the countrywide campaign to recover illegal arms, the law and order enforcement forces had recovered 77 firearms of various types, 180 cartridges and 45 explosives. During the same period, 768 persons have been arrested on charges of various crimes, including keeping illegal arms.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Navy Chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam; Air Force Chief Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed; Election Commission Secretary Mohammad Ershadul Haq; Home Ministry Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat; Inspector General of Police A.S.M. Shahjahan; Mahbubur Rahman, chief of the Army's General Staff; Principal Staff Officer Major General M.S.A. Bhuiyan; Bangladesh Rifles Director General Major General Ejaz Ahmad Chowdhury; Major General M.A. Qadir Talukdar, Ansar [paramilitary] and Village Defense Party director general; DGFI [expansion unknown] Director General Major General Ghulam Aminuzzaman; additional Election Commission secretary, S.M. Zakaria; and director general of MSI [expansion unknown], retired Brigadier A.G.M. Aminul Haq [words indistinct].

Commissioner Views Steps for Fair Election

BK2312154095 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has said that stern action will be taken against those who try to illegally interfere or exert influence in election work. He was addressing the secretaries of different ministries and divisions, and also the chiefs of different corporations in Dhaka today. Justice Sadeque firmly stated that no person will be able to unjustly harm any official or employee engaged in election work. He advised all the divisional heads to train the field-level workers to remain aloof from all sorts of influence while carrying out their election duties.

The chief election commissioner said that several tough measures have been taken to hold free, fair, and impartial parliamentary elections. He said if it appears to the Election Commission that any election has not been held freely, then the commission may cancel this election at any time. Election Inquiry Committees have been formed in every district to probe into irregularities prior to the elections, and a Code of Conduct has been formulated and made compulsory for contesting candidates.

Justice Sadeque added that in accordance with the demands of the political parties, people who have failed to repay loans have been barred from participating in the national elections. He added that election expenses have been limited to 300,000 taka and this too must be spent from bank account. The chief election commissioner said the administration, law enforcement agencies, and the government media have been brought under the control of the Election Commission. Any official engaged in election work cannot be transferred without prior permission of the commission during the period from the date of announcement of the election schedule until 15 days after the end of the elections. Justice Sadeque said apart from this, steps have been taken to set up an information cell with a view to provide equal opportunities in the government-owned media to political parties contesting the elections. He also referred to the formation of a law and order cell and measures taken to recover illegal arms from the country.

Asks Police To Work Impartially

BK2612130995 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has said that the local police administration must work impartially to ensure peace and discipline during the forthcoming parliamentary elections. He said this while inaugurating a workshop on the prevention of election offenses and irregularities organized for the officers in charge of police stations in Dhaka today. He said the country is passing through a very critical period and added that the police force plays a very vital role in the maintenance of peace and discipline.

Justice Sadeque said the Election Commission is firm and committed to holding the forthcoming parliamentary elections in a free, fair, and impartial manner at any cost. He added that for this purpose, measures have already been taken for the recovery of illegal arms and the detention of criminals and terrorists. He called upon the officers in charge of police stations to make all- out efforts in this drive for the recovery of illegal arms. Cautioning the concerned officials, Justice Sadeque said that if any allegation regarding negligence of duty, irregularity, corruption, or partiality is received the Election Commission will take stern measures to punish them. A total of 59 officers in charge of police stations took part in this workshop.

The Election Commission, in a press release, said that on the sixth day today of the countrywide arms recovery drive launched to enable the holding of the forthcoming elections in a peaceful manner, the law enforcement agencies recovered 59 firearms, 136 bullets, and 24 explosives. During the drive, a total of 594 people have been arrested on charges of keeping illegal arms and other charges.

Parties Decide To Run in Parliamentary Election

BK2312155695 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the third day of the countrywide drive launched to recover illegal arms, members of the law enforcement agency recovered 80 firearms, 181 bullets, and 232 explosives from different parts of the country today. A press release from the Election Commission said that 721 persons were arrested today on charges of keeping illegal arms and for involvement in other crimes.

Jatiyatabadi Jatiya Party has decided to nominate 100 candidates for contesting in the ensuing parliamentary elections. Bangladesh Jatiya League has also decided to participate in forthcoming elections.

More Parties To Participate

BK2512163195 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Central Committee of BAKSAL [Bangladesh Awami Krishak Sramik League] at a meeting in Dhaka today has decided to participate in the sixth Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] elections. An 11-member parliamentary board of the party was formed.

Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan has so far nominated 70 candidates for the forthcoming parliamentary elections. A press release issued in Dhaka by the party said that the interviews were held at the party office yesterday and today.

Bangladesh Gono Oikya Front has also decided to take part in the parliamentary elections. This was disclosed by the front secretary general, Advocate Jahangir Alam Khan, at a news conference in Dhaka today.

Meanwhile, more arms were recovered and miscreants arrested on the fifth day today of the nationwide drive to recover illegal arms. A press release of the Election Commission issued in Dhaka today said the members of the law enforcing agencies recovered 51 firearms, 163 rounds of bullets, and 45 explosives during the drive today. They also rounded up 707 people for keeping illegal arms and involving in different crimes during the period.

BNP Said 'Unlikely' To Grant More Concessions

BK2612105295 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 21 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Nazmul Ashraf]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ruling BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] is unlikely to give 'any more concession' to the agitating Opposition as regards the modality of an interim government since the party policy planners are apprehensive of the Opposition's sincerity about resolving the lingering political crisis within the ambit of the Constitution, competent sources indicated.

The authorised negotiators of the ruling party were now taking least interest in continuing back-stage parleys with their counterparts in the Opposition and they are unlikely to make further contacts unless the Opposition leaders come up with any new proposals, the sources said quoting BNP stalwarts.

Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador David N. Merrill met separately BNP leader and Information and Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam and Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu on Monday. This has created considerable interest in the political circles.

"The central leaders were now busy finalising the list of party nominees for the elections. The list would be announced shortly after interviews of the rest of applicants are held on December 23-24, said a member of the BNP nomination body.

Sources close to the BNP negotiators said, the policymakers of the party believed that the Opposition did not want elections within the February 22 constitutional deadline, and wanted to push the polls beyond the deadline. Once the Opposition succeeded, they would put pressure on the BNP to go for constitutional amendments regarding the election deadline and holding of polls under a non-party caretaker government, which the ruling party was determined not to accept.

India

Investigation of West Bengal Arms Drop Continuing

CBI Heading Probe

BK2612142095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] will conduct the entire investigation relating to the airdropping of foreign arms in Purulia villages of West Bengal. This decision was taken following a request from the union Home Ministry to the West Bengal Government. The state chief secretary, Mr. N. Krishnamurty, told newsmen in Calcutta this evening that the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, has agreed to the center's proposal as this will facilitate the coordination of different agencies connected with the case.

The two persons arrested in New Delhi in connection with the airdropping of arms have been brought to Calcutta under strict security today. Six crew members of the Russian aircraft arrested in Mumbai [Bombay] are also being brought to Calcutta by a special Air Force aircraft.

Meanwhile, the search operation in the three villages of Purulia is going on. The police have warned that house-to-house will begin tomorrow if the villagers fail to heed their request to deposit all arms and ammunition by today.

Plane Crew Brought to Calcutta

BK2612163395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] will conduct the entire investigation relating to the airdropping of foreign arms in Purulia village of West Bengal. This followed a request to this effect from the union Home Ministry to the West Bengal Government. The state chief secretary, Mr. N. Krishnamurty, told newspersons in Calcutta this evening that the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, has agreed to the center's proposal as this will facilitate the coordination of different agencies connected with the case.

The six crew members of the Russian aircraft who were arrested in Mumbai [Bombay] in connection with airdropping of arms in Purulia have been brought to Calcutta amidst tight security this evening. They were taken by the police immediately after their arrival to an unknown destination for further interrogation. Earlier, the two persons arrested in New Delhi in this connection were also brought to Calcutta.

Meanwhile, the 11 Anand Margis [activists of Hindu cult] remanded to police custody yesterday were transferred to judicial custody this evening. The investigating officer informed the subdivisional judicial magistrate court in Purulia that the Anand Margis need not be kept in police custody anymore.

The search operation in the three villages of Purulia is going on. The police have warned that house-to-house search will begin tomorrow if the villagers fail to heed the request to deposit all arms and ammunition by today.

A committee under a special secretary in the Home Ministry has been set up to look into all aspects of civil aviation as they relate to the country's security. A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting held under the chairmanship of the cabinet secretary. The committee will recommend measures to facilitate smooth movement in the air corridor of the country while keeping in view the security concerns. It has representatives from various ministries and security agencies.

Meanwhile, the AN-26 cargo aircraft that was forced to land at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday [24 December] is still being detained for completion of formalities. According to official sources, the aircraft will be further inspected by various security agencies before it is cleared for its onward journey. The aircraft has been placed under tight security till the completion of formalities.

Crew: Half of Cargo Near Karachi

BK2712033395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The crew members of the AN-26 aircraft allegedly involved in the Purulia arms dropping incident are reported to have revealed that half of the lethal cargo it carried was still lying near Karachi in Pakistan. The six crew members arrested in Mumbai [Bombay] were flown to Calcutta yesterday for further interrogation. Two persons arrested in New Delhi in this connection have also been taken to Calcutta. The West Bengal Government has accepted the center's [federal government's] proposal to entrust the entire investigation on the arms air dropping incident to the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation]. The center has also set up a committee under the special secretary in the Home Ministry to look into all aspects of civil aviation and the country's security concern.

More Arms Recovered

BK2612032995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The central government says it will take all necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of the arms airdropping incident. Speaking to newspersons in Jammu, the minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, said the security agencies are investigating the incident. He described the incident as a breach of faith, international convention, and agreements by a foreign airliner.

Meanwhile, more arms have been recovered from different villages of Purulia District in West Bengal. The police and paramilitary forces will launch a house-to-house search from tomorrow to recover the arms as the ultimatum to deposit arms comes to an end today.

AIR Calcutta correspondent reports that the police has started interrogation of 11 persons, including five foreigners, who were arrested from the headquarters of Anand Marg [Hindu cult] on Sunday [24 December]. The arrested persons have been remanded to police custody. The six crew members of the AN-26 aircraft, which is believed to have drooped arms are being taken to Purulia.

Minister Implicates Pakistan

BK2712092695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The West Bengal police and paramilitary forces have started an extensive house-to-house search in the villages under Jhalda and Jaipur police station areas in Purulia District. The operation commenced this morning to retrieve the arms and ammunition that might have been stored secretly.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Syed Sibte Razi reached Purulia a short while ago. Earlier, he met senior investigating officials of the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] and other agencies in connection with the arms dropping incident in Purulia. He is scheduled to visit the villages this afternoon.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0855 GMT on 27 December adds: "Pakistan's military intelligence is suspected of organizing last week's mysterious air-drop of weapons over eastern India, a senior minister was quoted as saying Wednesday [27 December]. Home Minister S.B. Chavan told reporters in the western city of Pune that the 'needle of suspicion' pointed towards Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. Describing the parachuting of the weapons as a 'new feature of terrorist tactics,' Chavan described the incident as 'a serious development which cannot be taken lightly.' The home minister, the effective number two in the cabinet of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, said it was too early to say who the assault rifles, rocket launchers, pistols and thousands of rounds of ammunition were intended for."

[AFP adds: "An internal security official said Tuesday that the aircraft, whose flight originated in Karachi, had planned to drop a second consignment of weapons. Minister of State for Home Affairs Sibte Razi also said that Pakistan's 'Inter-Services Intelligence is the prime suspect.'"]

Official Claims 'Breakthrough'

BK2712162095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has already made a breakthrough into the mystery about the air-dropping of sophisticated arms by a foreign aircraft in Purulia District of West Bengal last week. This was stated by the union minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, in Calcutta this evening on his return from Purulia. He said the agencies investigating the case have already secured some vital information but it cannot be disclosed at this stage for security reasons. The minister further stated that the entire episode is being looked into by a seven-member secretary- level committee constituted recently. The committee has been asked to submit its report within a week.

The combing operations for more arms and ammunition in 22 villages in Purulia District which started this morning will continue four days. Meanwhile, the 11 Ananda Margis [activists of Hindu cult], including five foreigners, were released on bail by the subdivisional judicial magistrate, Purulia, this afternoon. They have been directed not to leave the local police station area.

The government has cleared the An-26 cargo aircraft that was forced to land in Delhi on Sunday for its onward journey. The clearance was given after completing the inspection of the aircraft.

The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, has said the involvement of Pakistan in the arms dropping incident at Purulia cannot be ruled out. He was talking to newsmen in Pune today. Mr. Chavan said the government is adequately prepared to deal with infiltration of terrorists and even illegal arms from across the border.

The minister of state for external affairs, Mr. Salman Khursheed, has said the recent paradropping of arms in Purulia District by foreign nationals has given a setback to normalizing the Indo-Pak relations. He was speaking to newsmen in Kanpur. The minister said that the investigation is in full swing. He expressed confidence that the powers behind the arms dropping incident will soon be unearthed.

'Conspiracy' Seen

BK2712104695 Delhi HINDUSTAN in Hindi 25 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Pakistan's Conspiracy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The matter of the dropping of weapons by an unidentified plane over villages in Purulia District in West Bengal is quite baffling. Although without a complete inquiry nothing can be said with finality, according to one hypothesis, which eventually received confirmation, this event was part of an international conspiracy to fan terrorist activities in South Asia, the center of this conspiracy being Pakistan. It is quite possible that these weapons were dropped in Purulia by mistake, well before their actual destination was reached. However, the leading facts must be considered first. The plane, an AN-26, which was forced to land in Bombay last Friday, was made in Latavia. It has also been revealed that it was bought by a private company in Hong Kong, though it was UK-registered. The name of the company is possibly Carol and permission to use Indian air space to fly to Burma was also sought under this name. But the crew had four Latvian citizens and its pilot was an former British Royal Air Force pilot. Indian intelligence agencies are working on the theory that it was this AN- 26 plane that dropped the weapons over Purulia District. However, some other facts weave a mystery out of this event. On the Friday night when the plane was ordered to land in Bombay, its pilot had begun to mouth abuse, only landing when surrounded by two fighters of the Indian Air Force. One of the crew members, believed to be a Swiss citizen, managed to escape under cover of darkness when he was being taken for interrogation. This person could have given most information about this secret flight. Although the plane was given permission to go on to Burma via Varanasi, it deviated from its course under a false pretext and flew towards Calcutta. The normal flight time from Varanasi to Calcutta is 45 minutes, but this plane took three and a half hours. Meanwhile the authorities in Hangar assert that they never gave any permission to this plane to land in their country. At least they had no arms dealing with Pakistan. But these weapons bear Chinese marks and Burma needs no middle agency to buy weapons from China, so, apparently, the destination of these weapons was not Burma. Moreover, it has been confirmed that two of its crew members were residing in Karachi for the last two months. These weapons could have been made in China or simply carry marks put on them in Pakistan.

If this is the plane that dropped the weapons, it prompts many more questions: Who bought these weapons, hired the plane, paid for the travel costs, and for what purpose? Even if the intelligence agency of Pakistan, with the help of some international organization was planning to send these planes to India's north-eastern region to fan terrorist activities, it need not have gone to such trouble. The smuggling of Chinese weapons across the Arunachal Pradesh- Burmese border has been going on for a long period of time. Even though the actual intention was to make these weapons reach the north-eastern Indian states, Purulia was a poor choice because of its proximity to Bangladesh. After dropping the weapons in the region, the plane secretly flew direct to Thailand and, seizing its opportunity, tried to reach Karachi via Madras to inform the conspirators about its success in the mission.

However, there is no doubt that these weapons were sent by Pakistan because of the similarity with the way Pakistan is also supplying weapons to the Taleban in Afghanistan. The destination of these weapons may have been Bangladesh, where Pakistan is striving to stir up terrorism. The growing popularity of Sheikh Hasina is anathema to Pakistan and its allies. Another possibility could be that these weapons were being sent ultimately for the LTTE's use via a secret hideout in Bangladesh. Equally possible is that it was a conspiracy to create misunderstanding between China and India. Wherever the actual destination and whatever the purpose of this mission, it sounds a warning bell for Indian security. Now we must guard our security with great alertness. Pakistan is quite capable of deliberately creating an anti-Indian atmosphere in South Asia with tacit help from its masters. The Inter Services Intelligence has already been trying to unify all the terrorist groups active in India for this purpose. So, there is no doubt that this dropping of weapons is part of some deep international conspiracy and India should guard against it.

Prime Minister on Readiness To Meet External Threats

BK2712160495 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has assured the people that the country is fully prepared to meet the new threat to its integrity from the external forces. Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao was addressing a meeting at Koilkonda village in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh today. He said if the country remains united and devoid of communal tension, it will have strength to face such threats.

Mr. Narasimha Rao also laid the foundation stone for a 90 crore rupee rural water supply scheme in the village. The scheme will benefit 318 villages in the district.

Later, speaking at a convention at Nandial, Mr. Rao expressed satisfaction over the successful implementation of Mahila Smridhi Yojana [Women's Empowerment Scheme] and a program for the development of women and children in rural areas in the state. The prime minister said women-oriented schemes will provide economic independence and social security.

He also inaugurated a high-power TV transmitter and a 220- kilovolt electric substation at Nandial.

Two Arrested for Assassinating Punjab Minister

BK2312101895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Punjab police has nabbed the two main accused in the assassination of the former Punjab chief minister, Beant Singh. The accused Jagtar Singh Hawara and Balwant Singh were arrested yesterday evening. This was stated by the Punjab police chief, Mr. K.P.S. Gill, at a press conference in Chandigarh this morning. He said the police captured Jagtar Singh at Jullundur bus stand while Balwant Singh was nabbed near Rajpura town in Patiala District. A large quantity of explosive materials, including 12 kilograms of RDX, was recovered from Balwant Singh.

Plot To Kill Punjab Governor, Minister Foiled

BK2712051495 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Punjab, a conspiracy to kill the state governor, the chief minister, and the police chief has been foiled by the police. The police chief, Mr. K.P.S. Gill, told newspersons at Patiala that two militants have been arrested in this connection. Twenty-eight kilograms of RDX, 33 detonators, and several other arms and ammunition have been recovered from them. During interrogation, the militants revealed their plan to kill the three dignitaries.

Insurgency-Related Violence in Manipur, Tripura

BK2612103095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Manipur chief minister, Mr. Rishang Keishing, has said that there is no question of his government resigning under threat from any underground outfit. Talking to newsmen at Imphal this morning, Mr. Keishing however expressed the government's willingness to hold talks with the underground militants to solve the insurgency problems in the state. He also disclosed that he has had consultations with prominent citizens to seek their intervention in finding a peaceful solution to the problem.

Referring to the attempt on the life of a Congress-I MLA [member of legislative assembly] yesterday, in which the guard commander of the MLA was killed and five others injured, the chief minister said all MLA's have been asked to restrict their movements on security grounds.

In Tripura, two persons, including a constable, have been killed and arms looted in an attack by suspected insurgents of the Tripura Resurrection Army, TRA, on a police post at Kalasi area under the Belonia Subdivision of South Tripura District. Police in Agartala today said a combing operation has been launched in the area and senior police officials are camping at the spot.

Meanwhile, 27 insurgents of the All Tripura Tiger Force led by their self-styled area commander, Hatthu Singh Jamatia, yesterday surrendered at Kila under the Udaipur Subdivision of the South District. The insurgents also deposited large quantities of arms and ammunition.

Officials Polled on U.S. Nuclear Test Charges

BK2712044295 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 24 Dec 95 p 11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India may or may not be preparing for another nuclear test. But the news claiming

India is doing so has a life of its own. After all, the nuclear war game hinges upon subtle and stealthy ploys. Just as deterrence is said to be the prime objective of the enormous stockpiling of the atomic bomb, so the news about India's preparations for a second nuclear test after 21 years can serve its own purpose.

Both Washington and New Delhi can find reasons to be happy that such a news has gained currency. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] looms large before both. In India the situation is compounded by the imminent elections.

Going by America's reactions, India has certainly got its intended effect from the spread of this news. Within the country the news has not snowballed into a major issue but there will most likely be a subliminal effect, especially since it has coincided with the publication of an opinion poll which says most Indians want the government to go in for test bombing.

It has certainly made the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], which has never made secret of its desire that India should go nuclear and declare itself to be a nuclear power, come out with a pious offer to cooperate with the government for adopting a unanimous resolution in Parliament on India's nuclear policy, if a consensus emerged on this important issue. Parliament, however, remained tied up in knots over the telecom tangle.

A cross-section of opinion reflects the effectiveness of any such move by the government. * Major General Dipankar Banerjee, deputy director, Indian Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses:

THE NEW YORK TIMES report about our nuclear testing was inspired and motivated. It could have been motivated because it is being perceived in the West that India's stand on NPT is changing. It could also be a way to draw global attention to India's nuclear capability, thus sensitising global opinion against India.

It could be a way to speed up the whole process of the CTBT. This is where the timing of the leak becomes important with the Geneva talks in January. The argument could be that if the CTBT is not signed countries like India are liable to explode the bomb any minute. Thereby lessening the impact of the Brown Amendment and set the way for more such Amendments.

However, I do not think we should go in for nuclear testing right now. Instead, India should keep its options open to show the world that we do have the capability.
* Dr K.Subrahmanyam, defence analyst and columnist:

The American press is playing the game of the government in power. This is a line that was also apparent in the mid-80s when THE WASHINGTON POST correspondent based in Delhi, courtesy some leaks, inferred that one Jaguar squadron was missing and concluded that it was on a mission to bomb Kahuta. Later on, of course, the truth was known but the damage had been done.

There is merit in the argument that we should carry out these tests. India needs to prove to the world now that it has the adequate technology to go in for more "updated" testing.

Without an adequate number of tests India will not have the confidence in its weapons. All over the world to perfect nuclear capability countries have gone in for a number of tests. China, it is reported, has gone in for 40.

* J.N. Dixit, former foreign secretary:
Pranab Mukherjee has categorically said that India was not conducting any nuclear tests even though we have the potential. But we must exercise our nuclear option and should go in for the nuclear bomb. We have shilly-shallied for too long on this issue. Some punitive action will be taken but, if as a country we can't stand the pressure than what is the point?
* I.K Gujral, former external affairs minister:
This is a canard spread by THE NEW YORK TIMES. It is in the same class as the Seymour Hearsh story that India was ready to explode a bomb. Behind this is the American attempt to pressurise us on CTBT. For once the Government of India is taking a correct stand and we should refuse to sign the CTBT.
* Mani Shankar Aiyer, Congress MP:
The Congress government has a clear cut policy on this matter as is evident from our refusal to translate our capability to make nuclear weapons into actually making them. But there is nothing more irresponsible than the BJP's stand that we must go in for a nuclear bomb.
* Jaswant Singh, BJP MP:
I don't think the government has gained any political mileage from this issue. What has emerged is that the government has no policy on the issue at all. Silence is no policy, denial is no policy, nor is ambiguity a euphemism for policy.

I don't think national security has the necessary political sex appeal. The low attendance in Parliament when such debates are on is evidence enough. The issue has high appeal only when the bullets are flying.

Rao Views Results of Liberalization Policy

BK1712073195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister said the economic liberalization policy pursued by the government has started yielding results. Mr. Narasimha Rao was addressing a public meeting at Agasode, about seven kilometers from Bina, in Madhya Pradesh this evening. Earlier, he laid the foundation stone for a 5,300 crore rupee oil refinery at Bina, the first in the state. He said that a stable government is the most important factor to attract foreign investors. Mr. Rao said the center is considering a proposal to allow foreign investors to spend one percent of the total cost of the projects for providing facilities like schools, roads, and hospitals. He said this will help the local people. Mr. Rao said new policies have been announced for women, students, and youths for the welfare of different sections of the society.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister for petroleum and natural gas, Captain Satish Sharma, said the oil sector has received 42,000 crore rupees investment during the last four years. Oil production has increased by 10 million tons saving foreign exchange worth 5,400 crore rupees during the period. The refinery is being set up in the joint sector by Bharat Petroleum Corporation and an oil company of Oman. It will have an annual capacity of 60 lakh tons.

Iran

Ministry Denies Links to German Assassination

LD2712122895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The spokesman of the Intelligence Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has announced: None of the people accused in the Berlin Mykonos trial have any connection with this ministry, and the spiteful news stories with regard to their links and contacts with this ministry in relation to the incident on 17 September 1992 in Berlin have no truth or validity.

The spokesman stressed: Although in his statement of charges issued in the month of Khordad 1372 [month beginning 22 May 1993], the former German public prosecutor referred to a news conference given by the intelligence minister with regard to pursuing the activities of the armed groups opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran outside its own borders, the news conference was quoted in an incomplete fashion and out of context, and, in fact, the intelligence minister himself, in another interview published in newspapers dated 8 September 1992, rejected possible misinterpretations before they even occurred. Therefore, any kind of provocative exploitation are rejected as false and lacking in any evidence in support.

In addition to this, in talks between the officials of the Intelligence Ministry and the relevant German officials, it was consistently stressed that the Berlin trial is occurring in a politicized and sensationalized climate, with spiteful pre- judgements arising from the propaganda carried out in Zionist circles and by groups opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran and with provocative accusations being raised by the prosecutor, and that continuing the trial in that poisonous atmosphere will result in a false outcome and in an incorrect verdict, the consequence of which would be the fulfillment of the illegitimate and opportunistic wishes of enemies who oppose healthy and correct relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries.

Tehran Said Ready To Continue POW Swap With Iraq

LD2712123895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced its readiness to continue the exchange of POW's with Iraq on the basis of the recent Tehran agreement. According to the Central News Unit, this was announced by Brigadier General Najafi, head of the counterintelligence public office of the General Staff Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces and head of the POW commissions. He was speaking at a ceremony honoring the valuable services rendered by the self-sacrificing soldier of Islam, martyr Mohammad Ali Nazaran. He added: In the first half of this year [beginning 21 March 1995], the Islamic Republic of Iran has been taking practical steps to solve the problem of the release of the POW's, and an example of this is the release of 100 Iraqi POW's during Unity Week.

He hoped that the Iraqi Government will exercise its good will and take some effective and positive steps to resolve the POW problem.

The report states that during the ceremony, it was announced that, at the suggestion of the counterintelligence public office of the General Staff Command of the Armed Forces and the approval of the commander in chief of the Armed Forces [Khamene'i], the name of Tehran's Heshmatiyeh base has been changed to the Martyr Mohammad Ali Nazaran base. [passage omitted]

Velayati Opposes Any Plan To Partition Iraq

*LD2712120795 Tehran IRNA in English
1147 GMT 27 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 27, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati here Wednesday called as "dangerous" any likely plan to partition Iraq and underlined the need for exchange of views and coordination among Tehran, Damascus and Ankara in that regard.

Velayati, speaking at a meeting of senior political experts from Iranian, Syrian and Turkish Foreign Ministries, said that coordination among and decisions taken by the three countries would consolidate peace and stability in the region.

The second meeting of the senior political experts from the Iranian, Syrian and Turkish Foreign Ministries started here Tuesday to survey the latest developments in northern Iraq.

Speaker Criticizes U.S. 'Plots' Against Iran

*LD2612144895 Tehran IRNA in English
1438 GMT 26 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damavand, Tehran Province, Dec. 26, IRNA — Iran's Majles speaker, Hojatoleslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri on Tuesday lambasted the U.S. plots against the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying Washington's biased moves against Iran are doomed to failure thanks to the resistance and vigilance of the Iranian people.

The speaker made it clear that no power can bring a united government and people to their knees.

Nateq-Nuri made the remarks here during his one day our of Damavand, east of Tehran.

Reaction to U.S. Decision on Covert Activity

Speaker Remarks

*NC2512141895 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian
14 Dec 95 p 2*

[Report from the Political Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] The liberals [preceding word in English] believe there should be development, even at the expense of the wishes of many people. The Islamic system considers development a necessary precursor of social justice and is not willing to sacrifice the deprived by letting the wheels of development trample them.

Islamic Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri made his remarks while addressing a gathering at Hoseyniyeh-ye Mohebban-al A'immeh on Tuesday [12 December] on "The current situation and the future path." He referred to the old satanic plans of the enemies of Islam, pitting science against religion and projecting the clergy as opposed to science and specialization and added: We favor the propagation of science and knowledge but oppose the supremacy of science ['elmsalaari], since we believe the result of such specialization without commitment is catastrophe, such as the atomic bombing of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

According to the public relations department of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association, Nateq-Nuri stated elsewhere in his address: We still believe that relations with the United States would be those of the wolf and the sheep [as published]. He added that the United States continues to utilize all its resources overtly to inflict blows on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this context, he alluded to the despicable suggestion by the U.S. House speaker for a budget allocation to topple the Islamic Republic of Iran's government and asserted that this was merely one of innumerable similar instances of U.S. interference in the internal affairs of a country, despite its claims to the contrary.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Nateq-Nuri also stressed the need for the extensive presence by the people in the Majles elections and added: In the country's free political atmosphere all the legitimate political groups and parties can embark on free electioneering activities and nominate their candidates.

He thanked the country's widely circulated newspapers for propounding election issues and said: By doing so, the newspapers have involved the people in election issues.

The Islamic Majles speaker continued: With their great political acumen, the people can sift the wheat from the chaff and not let personal problems deter them from maintaining an active presence on the scene of the defense of the Islamic Revolution.

Regarding the electioneering activities of the various groups and associations and those organizations that have the same orientation as the Tehran Militant Clergy Association, Nateq-Nuri remarked: Based on the opinion of His Eminence Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani, it has been decided that 11 organizations, namely, the Islamic Engineers Society, the Islamic Coalition Association, the Islamic Students Association, the Islamic Workers Association, the Zeynab Society, and other such institutions supporting the Tehran Militant Clergy Association line, can present individual or combined lists of candidates and there is no reason for them to follow Tehran Militant Clergy Association decisions to the letter.

Deputy Rejects Rapprochement

LD2412143895 Tehran IRNA in English
1407 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — A senior Majles deputy has said the policy of the Islamic government is based on rejecting any kind of rapprochement between Tehran and Washington.

Majles deputy and vice-chairman of the Foreign Policy Commission, Mohammad Javad Larijani, made the remark in an interview published by the morning Persian language daily AKHBAR on Sunday.

Larijani stressed that all Iranian officials must take into account this ban on relations with the U.S.

The Majles deputy pointed out that given the very hostile policy of the U.S. towards Iran, "we should not show the slightest leniency in establishing relations with the U.S."

"I am categorically opposed to any leniency towards the U.S," Larijani stressed. He added, "at the same time, I do not agree with our policy being hostile or creating tension."

Larijani said "we are wielding the flag of peace and understanding, but if somebody treats us in a hostile manner, we do not have any reason to treat him mildly."

The senior parliamentarian said "if the U.S. wants to show that Iran cannot survive without the U.S., we should demonstrate that we can do without the U.S. If we fail in doing so, we will lead the future generations astray."

The Majles deputy noted that distinction should be drawn between establishing rational relations and surrendering to bullying.

He stressed "as long as the U.S. treats us arrogantly, I am opposed to establishing relations with it, and I do not think it would be in our interest to show leniency towards America."

Larijani said that the American Congress proposed that budget should be earmarked for CIA to overthrow the Islamic regime in Iran, pointing out that "this is an example of state-terrorism".

Reaction to U.S. Moves To Tighten Embargo

Moves Said 'Futile'

LD2212133695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 22 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. Senate approved on Saturday December 20th [as heard] a bill that introduces punitive measures against the foreign firms that make investments in industry with Iran and Libya. The bill, if ratified by the U.S. House of Representatives, will allow U.S. President Bill Clinton to punish foreign firms or individuals that make investment in Iran or Libya.

Economic experts believe that the approval of the recent bill in the U.S. Senate will be just as impractical as the last few months of sanctions against Iran. Furthermore, the successful implementation of the first five-year development plan in Iran has seen to the economic foundations of the country. These facilities will be instrumental in putting Iran on the path to innovation and even more growth in the second five-year development plan.

Also the political and economic status of the Islamic Republic of Iran within the region has made possible a better employment of the potential and the existing facilities. At the international level, a number of factors will hinder the execution of the U.S. Senate bill.

First, from the economic point of view, mutual interest is the incentive for making investment, and foreign investors will consider Iran's willingness for doing business, rather than retreating from their positions due to U.S. pressures.

Second, the grave economic condition in the U.S. with the budget deficit and high debts does not allow Clinton to introduce punitive measures on the foreign firms. Also from the political point of view, one can say that Clinton is taking it for granted that other countries will back him up, while the past few months experiences show that not only world states stop short of supporting Clinton in economic embargo against Iran, but they at numerous occasions announce their opposition to America's demands.

In this regard, mention can be made of deepening of trade and economic ties between Iran and European states as well as countries in Southeast Asia and other states. Anyway, it seems that the unilateral sanction of America against Iran will remain futile, taking into consideration Iran's significant status in the Middle East and Central Asia. Experts of international affairs believe that the U.S. recent bill to tighten economic embargo against Iran is more an unreal plan than a well-thought design.

Paper: 'Bullying' Hurts U.S. Image

NC2312075795 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES (INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY) in English 14 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "The Deadbeat Dad Wants Disciplined Sons"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] This week the U.S. Senate Banking Committee unanimously decided to tighten sanctions against the Islamic Republic by punishing foreign companies dealing with Iran's oil industry. The measure Is expected to be passed by both houses of the U.S. congress and reportedly has the blessings of President Clinton.

The U.S. Congress is also known to be behind the refusal of Washington to pay some $1.25 billion of UN obligatory contributions which now threatens the world body which it helped to establish.

In a related move, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, George Moose, announced Tuesday [12 December] that the U.S. is also considering an oil embargo against Nigeria, which recently executed a noted opposition writer and his followers, to force its military rulers to hand power over to civilians.

These latest demonstrations of U.S. bullying point to the fallacy of the belief that whoever holds the purse wields authority.

Experience will prove that even prodigal sons will not always yield to threats of a financial boycott.

When President Clinton signed into law the first bill tightening sanctions on Iran in July, he tried to rally European countries to support the blockade, but to no avail.

When the U.S. decided to withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the international body continued its activities for humanity unhampered.

U.S. Ambassador to Geneva, Daniel Spiegel, made a stinging attack on the "forces of isolation and reaction" seeking to cut funding to the UN, comparing them to an absent father who refuses to support his children. The U.S. tries to hold its financial strings as though it were not itself beset with the worst of financial problems in its own household. Moreover, the French oil company, Total, has already questioned the legal basis of any sanctions the U.S. government could possibly impose on an international community where each state is a sovereign entity.

On the other hand, by neglecting treaty obligations which make it internationally indictable for nonpayment of its UN obligations, it lays down the example that laws, especially those of an international character, have very little domestic effect.

The international community is rich in experience of more powerful countries trying to bully the less powerful and ending themselves castigated.

The answer is as it has always been: "No way" for U.S. bullying. If it wants to regain its status as a reliable world power it should set the example by, at least, showing financial credibility and coming up to its mandatory obligations to the world body.

The Senate bullying has so far dealt severe blows to the U.S. prestige. If the Senate wants to settle its differences with Clinton administration, there are other ways to recourse to. The House of Representatives should not allow the Senate to hold the American nation and prestige to ransom.

Turkish Envoy: Government Change Not To Affect Ties

LD2512122895 Tehran IRNA in English 1209 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA — Turkey's policy towards the Islamic Republic of iran is strategic and unchangeable, Turkish Ambassador to Tehran Ahmad Mithat Balkan commented here Sunday.

The Turkish diplomat made the remarks in a meeting with Deputy Interior Minister for Security and Diciplinary Affairs Gholam- Hossein Bolandian.

The Turkish ambassador also said that any change in governments of the two countries will not affect Tehran-Ankara ties.

Mithat Balkan added that the Turkish interior minister will soon visit Iran.

The two sides in their meeting also agreed on immediate holding of the next session of the Iran-Turkey Joint High Security Commission.

Commentaries on Victory of Islamic Party in Turkey

Refah Success Lauded

NC2512084695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to preliminary results of the Turkish parliamentary elections, the pro-Islamic

Welfare Party [Refah] has won an important victory by gaining over 21 percent of the votes. The traditional True Path Party and the Motherland Party are second and third respectively.

These are only preliminary results and there is a possibility of the Welfare Party being relegated to second place. The Turkish parliamentary elections were held in a calm atmosphere and provided an opportunity for the Turkish people to express their Islamic leanings again after decades of rule by secular parties, and to vote for a party that promises to create a wholesome society and clean government on the basis of Islamic shari'ah.

Before yesterday's election, the results of various opinion polls were disseminated indicating the apprehension of nonreligious parties of Turkey and the West. The success of the Welfare Party in Turkey assumes greater importance when viewed against the backdrop of conditions in which this party competes with established and deeply entrenched parties.

Turkey's rightist or leftist parties have independent sources of income and, directly or indirectly, capitalize on the support of reliable newspapers and publications. The Welfare Party—despite its brief existence and independence—has been forced to compete in an atmosphere in which all the other parties are unanimously and concurrently opposed to its increasing its presence on the political scene.

The main factor perturbing people about the Welfare Party gaining power in Turkey is the impact this would have on the direction of domestic and foreign policy in Turkey. The victory of the Welfare Party, which was predicted, will triple the number of its seats in parliament. It is being construed as the victory of the Islamic leanings of the Turkish people over laicist inclinations after 70 years. It will also enable the country—as it approaches the 21st century—to combat the resistance and obstacles the Islamists will encounter in the form of efforts to further Westernize Turkey and the West's cultural assault on Turkey.

In view of the relatively large number of seats it has gained in parliament, the Welfare Party, which carries the slogan "God willing, we are coming," is prepared to form a coalition government. But experts predict that the rightist secular parties will seek to isolate this party and say that they prefer to form a coalition with their old rivals, ignoring the parties that come first or second in the election.

No one expects the strengthening of the Welfare Party position to suddenly transform the country's political structure and situation. Developments—despite the democratic legitimacy of the election result—are enough to inspire apprehension among those who consider the Turkish elections to be a war between religious and laicist tendencies.

Election Win Viewed

LD2512121695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1106 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Greetings dear listeners. Let me draw your attention to today's political commentaries.

The victory in the Turkish parliamentary elections of the Islamist Refah [Welfare] party, which, according to the announced results, has won about 21 percent of the votes, has led to differing reactions inside and outside that country.

The Refah Party, led by Necmettin Erbakan, which began sometime ago to compete with the older established parties on the basis of the slogan of Islam and promises to form a clean and corruption-free government, set about — from the time of its coming to power in several Turkish cities following municipal elections — taking fundamental measures toward solving the problems of the people and establishing a healthy social and cultural environment; thus, rapidly gaining great popularity.

Many observers considered the Turkish elections to be a fresh battle between the principles of the secular government ruling in Turkey and Islamic tendencies — a battle that seems to have been resolved now, after 70 years of secular rule in that country, to the advantage of the general inclination of the people of that country, with its population of 65 million.

Although the Refah Party has campaigned on the basis of promises about combating corruption in government organs and the ethical immorality arising from imitation of the West, and, finally, solving the countless economic problems, such as unemployment, inflation, the budget deficit, and poverty, it has already proven its popularity in terms of the people's choice in elections. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the negative stances adopted by right- wing parties, government leaders and senior military men — all of whom see the elevation of the position of the Refah Party as a threat to themselves — the idea has taken root among informed observers that despite the differences between them, the right-wing parties will do their utmost to form a coalition in which the Refah Party will play no role.

In view of the fact that the Refah Party has won the relative majority in the elections, gaining over 100 seats in the parliament, analysts consider the possibility that the government and non- religious parties may be able to ignore the presence of a strong Islamist party, such as the Refah Party, as being unlikely.

At any rate, it seems as if, in the light of this important development in the arena of Turkey's domestic politics, that country's foreign policy will also alter its general lines to some extent to the advantage of the world of Islam, under the influence of the Islamists; even though the fundamental changes resulting from this development will take a relatively long time to unfold.

Russia's Davydov Agrees on Economic Cooperation

LD2712123395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Oleg Dmitriyevich Davydov, Russian deputy prime minister and minister for foreign economic relations, today met our country's economics and finance minister. The current process of economic and trade ties between Iran and Russia and ways of expanding and deepening these ties were discussed.

Mr. Davydov referred to the desire of his country to further expand economic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and said that Russia attaches great importance to its strategic ties with Tehran. The Russian deputy prime minister hopes that the economic ties between Iran and Russia will enter a new phase with the formation of a joint economic commission and the signing of a long term technical and economic program.

Our country's minister of economics and finance also emphasized the interest of Iran in expanding all-round relations with Russia and said that there are great potentials in economic and trade ties between the two countries.

The two sides reached agreement on formation of joint financial commissions, banking structures, and technical and economic cooperation.

According to the Central News Unit, during the meeting of the Russian foreign economic relations minister with Iran's minister of economics and finance, documents relating to 10 years of economic cooperation between the two countries will be prepared. These documents will be signed by the presidents of Russia and Iran at their next meeting.

Third Phase of Military Maneuvers in Gulf Ends

LD2512152395 Tehran IRNA in English 1513 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bushehr, Dec. 25, IRNA — Third phase of the war games code-named 'Ra'd (Thunder) was completed in the Persian Gulf waters on Monday, with participating units destroying hypothetical targets of enemies by long-range and medium-range missiles, heavy artillery fire and missile boats.

Deputy commander of the 'Ra'd maneuver, Colonel Hamid Ghowsi, elaborating on the military exercise, said in this phase of the war games, operations to crush hypothetical enemy positions and to prevent their infiltration using floating radar sites and missile boats were carried out.

Colonel Ghowsi said the ground-to-sea missile units, missile and rocket launching boats of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) returned safely to their bases after accomplishing their missions.

Reportage, Commentary on Upcoming Majles Elections

Morteza Alviri on Elections

96LA0065A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 29 Oct 95 pp 1, 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Iran's Constitution has afforded the Majles (Parliament) the authority to act as the highest decision-making body, Morteza Alviri, Majles representative in the second and third terms, said in an exclusive interview with IRAN NEWS.

In addition to tabling votes of confidence and impeaching the government, the Majles can investigate into all affairs and is the ultimate source in seeing to complaints lodged against the three branches, Alviri remarked.

He stressed that the Majles has the authority to even impeach a popularly-elected president, evincing the body's superior power and prerogatives.

"But," Alviri went on to say, "at present, the Majles appears to lack the needed means and mechanisms to fully enforce its authority."

Highly qualified representatives can enable the Majles to fully exercise its authority, Alviri said and highlighted the importance of electing highly competent representatives to carry out this momentous task.

"I perceive that there are two principal shortcomings in the election of representatives in Iran," he noted and cited the first as the inactivity of the parties, thus preventing the people from gaining precise information on the candidates' views.

"Many candidates, consenquently, fetch votes by making hollow promises," Alviri, the president's advisor in the Free Zones' affairs and secretary of the High Council of the Free Zones, clarified.

Second, most MPs have a regional—rather than a macro and national—outlook, he said, adding, "the MPs think of serving their own constituencies, while in many cases, regional interests are contrary to national and macro ones."

Most people vote for candidates who meet their regional needs and, therefore, some MPs, wishing to fetch votes in the next terms, spend their entire time on their constituencies' minor affairs, instead of dealing with fundamental and structural issues, he maintained.

Alviri noted, "this is the secret behind the gradual decline of the Majles from the first term up to the present."

"I regard the first term Majles as the most powerful, while other terms have undergone a decline, because the first-term MPs were mainly the prominent combatant and political figures who attached more importance to the country's overall interests," he said.

Alviri called for fundamental changes in the mode of elections to put an end to this decline.

The political and religious officials should inform the people of the Majles' mission, while groups and parties committed to the Islamic Republic and the Constitution should engage in open and healthy political activities, he said.

Alviri reiterated that in this way candidates with macro outlooks and expertise will be elected and will contribute to the qualitative promotion of the Majles as the most important decision-making body.

"If this happens, the Majles will have a bright and rosy future," he pointed out.

"Pitifully, at present, parliamentary activities are solely carried out by two particular political groups, thus barring the way for the election of many committed and expert individuals," he marked.

This situation will ultimately incur losses on the country and the system, Alviri said and added that an open political climate will enable all political groups to compete for the parliamentary elections.

"MPs with different specialties are needed for various Majles commissions, and if active, the parties can nominate candidates in order to fulfill the Majles' specialized requirements," he noted.

He elaborated that, otherwise, a limited number of people in the provinces might elect MPs, leading to the absence of expert and specialist representatives that could take the helm of the said commissions.

The Majles which, as stated by the late Imam, is the zenith of all bodies, requires informed and knowledgeable representatives, he stressed.

An MP uninformed of the primary economic affairs and principles will not provide mature comments on economic affairs, he marked and added that this is the shortcoming observed not only in the fourth Majles but also in the previous terms.

On the set-up of a group comprised of educated and committed Hezbollah members who have no affiliation to former factions and wings, Alviri noted, "our society is in need of various groupings in the political and social scenes."

"Confining activities to one or two particular groups will never be to the interest of the country," he stressed.

"Undoubtedly, if such a group is set up and if it nominates its candidates for the forthcoing elections, it can gain a landslide victory," Alviri stressed.

Ezhe'i on Religion/Politics Separation

96LA0066A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English
16 Nov 95 pp 1, 9

[Article by M. Serjooie]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—People's representative from Esfahan, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Ezhe'i told IRAN NEWS in a recent interview that arguments over the incompatibility of religious conviction and specialization date back to the 1906 constitutional movement (Mashrutiyat) which resulted in the removal of religious Ulema from the political scene in Iran.

Ezhe'i added that finally, "the 1921 coup by Reza Khan (Sardar Sepah) managed to totally eliminate the clergy from politics and government. This trend lasted throughout the Pahlavi regime until the Islamic Revolution put an end to this policy."

The Majles deputy maintained that the concept of separation of religion and government surfaced again after the Revolution, but did not achieve its aims after Bani-Sadr was forced to flee Iran.

"Proponents of this idea argued that those with strong religious convictions were not experts and lacked the necessary specializations for the administration of government affairs, while qualified experts and specialists lacked the all important religious conviction," Ezhe'i, a member of the Majles Commission on Administrative and Employment Affairs, said.

By pursuing this argument, Ezhe'i said, those people wanted to achieve two objectives: Destruction of the

Revolutionary thinking—which is the same as destroying Islam—and elimination of the committed religious elements from politics.

"Recently this philosophy was resurrected and lines were drawn separating the Hezbollah and the Technocrats, which makes one wonder if this campaign is perhaps designed to create antagonism between the social forces in the Islamic Republic and blame the religious elements for the government's political shortcomings," the Hojjat ol-Eslam said.

Ezhe'i added that statistics regarding the level of education of the current Majles' representatives proves that there is no contradiction between religious conviction and specialization in administrative and government affairs. He said the great majority of the country's experts are religious and pious, only a few believe neither in religion nor in country.

"Some Westernized Iranians wrongly believe that the absolute authority of the Vali-ye Faqih entitles him to dictatorial powers. This is far from the truth. The authority of the Vali-ye Faqih stems from the principles of Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and any diversions from these prescribed principles will lead to the dismissal of the Vali-ye Faqih," Ezhe'i said.

He maintained that there are those who believe that Vali-ye Faqih is only responsible for a limited number of social and religious affairs of the people, but other, including the late Imam Khomeyni, were of the opinion that all social, political and economic authority and responsibilities carried by the Prophet (S) in the early days of Islam are now vested in the person of the Vali-ye Faqih.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Ezhe'i also stated that, "a lot of Technocrats believe in Velayat-e Faqih, and a large number of those martyred in the course of the Islamic Revolution, such as Dr. Chamran, were followers of this principle."

"It is wrong to generalize. Each person's position on issues must be studied and understood before passing judgment on him," he concluded.

SALAM Views Need for Political Parties

NC2012112695 Tehran SALAM in Persian 9 Dec 95 p 2

[Answer to reader's question; from the "Hello, SALAM" Column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Caller] You are constantly emphasizing that the people should participate in the elections. How should we participate? For example, if a candidate favored by the educated and neutral rank is not nominated, are we supposed to ask illiterate persons, our neighbors, or the ones who lead the prayer congregations about who is going to protect their interests? I am literate myself, I have the acumen to make my own decisions and I do not like to partake of a mulligatawny soup prepared by others. You will certainly state that we should elect the individual who has passed through the various vetting formalities. I swear by God I am not blind and I will not be forced to consume the soup concocted by others and I request you advise others not to do so either.

[SALAM] We wish to say to this esteemed reader that we also want you to continue this debate so that we can find some common ground. We have recommended that the people should participate in the elections extensively, but we did not advise you to vote for someone you did not like. We even said that if you consider yourself a qualified person and have the ability to accept this responsibility you should register as a candidate. If you see an individual with the necessary qualities and qualifications, encourage him to file for candidacy or to form a party, especially nowadays when everyone seems to have awakened to the fact that there should be a political party in the country. It is also being said that some things went wrong because we do not have a political party.

During the time of his eminence the imam (may God's blessings be upon him) when he issued the instructions for dissolving the Republic Party, the radio and perhaps the television, under the management of one of the more parochial factions, disseminated a commentary on this issue which implied that the establishment of a political party or political faction is treachery to the revolution and the country. Their attitude was such that no other group dared to form another party as they felt that since their party was being dissolved, no other party had the right to exist.

The fact is that the most important point of his eminence the imam's auspicious opinion was that the clerics should not form a party, the details of which we will put at the disposal of our esteemed leaders at an opportune moment. However, he did not ban the non-clerics from forming a party. In any case, today, everyone seems to be thinking that a party would be wonderful and a political existence is impossible without a party. In fact, some are even contemplating an all-encompassing party. Perhaps a party may be formed which would have the support of those in power and could forge ahead with all its members who are scrupulously Islamic, revolutionary, supporters of the Velayat-e Faqih, and opposed to the United States. In brief, it would embody all values. So, the consensus of opinions that are being aired nowadays indicates the apprehension that, despite the existence of such a party, if someone were to form another party or become a member of another party he would certainly be considered a supporter of the U.S.-style Islam and be dubbed as being opposed to the Velayat-e Faqih and in favor of relations with the United States. He would be described as a counterrevolutionary, a suspect person who should be treated in a particular way.

Accordingly, our advice is not merely that one should only cast his vote, and this is something our esteemed reader should take note of, but that no problems can be solved by not participating or not voting. We should thank God that we have a popular system which is a corollary of a pure Islamic Revolution, which has been a bounty for the mature Iranian nation. A Nation that also has a capacity for political development which should be safeguard by an extensive and deeper participation.

Pakistan

'Millat-i-Qadian' Claims Peshawar Bombing

BK2712083795 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 27 Dec 95 pp 1, 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — An organisation named Millat-i-Qadian has accepted the responsibility for the disastrous car bomb explosion that took place in the main shopping centre here on last Thursday [21 December].

An unknown telephone caller who identified himself as a spokesman of the above organisation rang up the local offices of the News, Dawn and Mashriq on Tuesday night and said that Thursday's explosion should be taken as the first response to the challenge thrown by the Khatm-i-Nabawat (an anti-Ahmadi [Islamic sect] movement).

"We have accepted the challenge of Khatm-i-Nabawat," were the caller's words before he hung up the phone, a newsman who received the call told the FRONTIER POST.

The SP [superintendent of police] crime, Gulzarullah Khan, one of the explosion investigators, also received the same call, a police source said. The exact conversation between the caller and the police officer could not be ascertained despite every effort by this paper.

The newsman who received the call said that the caller did not give him a chance to ask questions while talking to him in a faulty Urdu with an Afghan accent. It may mentioned here that Millat-i- Qadian has never been heard of before. It is also significant to note that the acceptance of the responsibility for the explosion came soon after the press conference addressed by the provincial police chief in Peshawar on Tuesday. The police chief also released a photo-kit of a Persian-speaking Afghan who, according to the IGP [inspector general of police] was responsible for the bomb explosion that claimed over 40 lives.

Senate Debates Peshawar Bombing, Security

BK2612161895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mian Raza Rabbani, the minister of state for law and justice, has said the government is determined to combat terrorism and will not allow its soil to be used for any form of terrorist activity. Participating in the debate in the Senate today on the recent bomb blast in Peshawar, he said an inquiry is underway in this connection and the interior minister will brief the house tomorrow on the progress made in the investigations so far. He said both the federal and provincial governments are acting in unison to handle the situation.

Earlier, taking part in the debate, Raja Mohammad Zafarul Haq, the leader of the opposition in the Senate, described the incident as a security lapse and criticized the government for not taking preventive measures.

Maulana Mohammad Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi said maintaining law and order and protecting the lives and property of the people are the basic responsibility of the government, but it has not been able to do this effectively.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad described the bomb blast as a tragedy and said it is part of a conspiracy by our enemies, who want to destabilize the country and deprive us of our friends.

Barrister Masud Kausar condemned this act of terrorism and appealed to the opposition to cooperate with the government in tackling the problem.

Abdul Rahim Mandokhel criticized the government for not taking preventive measures and alleged that these incidents are the results of the nonparticipation of the people in the policy formulation process.

Taking part in the debate, Law Minister Professor N.D. Khan said Pakistan has repeatedly made it clear that it is pursuing a policy of noninterference toward Afghanistan. He categorically stated that Pakistan has nothing to do with the Taleban.

Ajmal Khattak believes that the internal and external policies of the government are to blame for such incidents.

Maulana Samiul Haq condemned this act of terrorism and said the government and the opposition should demonstrate unity in dealing with terrorism. He rejected allegations leveled by some members that Pakistan is interfering in the affairs of others.

The discussion was continuing when the house adjourned to meet again tomorrow morning.

Prime Minister Chairs Meeting on Afghan Policy

BK2612102295 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 25 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Aslam Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 24 — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto chaired a high-level meeting which focussed on our foreign policy vis-a-vis Afghanistan in the context of the reported anti-Pakistan activities being pursued by the different Afghan groups. The meeting was attended by the Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali and Pakistan's Ambassador to United States Dr. Maleeha Lodhi and other high ups of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Prime Minister was briefed in detail about the reported anti Pakistan activities of the Consul General of Afghanistan in Peshawar Musa Khan who was declared persona non grata and was asked to leave Pakistan within next 24 hours on Sunday.

She was also briefed about the clues and indications which suggested he involvement of some Afghans behind the tragic incident of terrorism which killed 47 and wounded 200 others in Peshawar on Thursday.

Official sources informed that the meeting decided that Pakistan will take (?its) friendly countries into confidence on the issue. The Foreign Minister and our Ambassador to United States will brief the relevant authorities of United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran and all those countries which had been supporting the policy of Pakistan on Afghanistan from the day occupation forces landed in the war torn country in 1979.

The meeting also deliberated upon the complications Pakistan is being faced with after all the Arab volunteers who look part in the Afghan war against the Soviet army thronged to Pakistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

The meeting decided that Pakistan will seek backing and moral support of all its friendly countries on the issue of terrorism and its stance on the Islamic extremists.

Peshawar Car Bomb Said Made From C-4 Explosives

BK2612094895 Karachi DAWN in English 25 Dec 95 pp 1, 14

[Report by Abdul Sami Paracha and Intikhab Amir]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Darra Adam Khel, Dec 24 — Enquiries made in this open arms bazar have revealed that the device used in Thursday's [21 December] car-bomb blast had been made with the well- known C-4 chemical which is a white jelly without smell.

Specialists who have been dealing in these chemicals for generations informed this correspondent that the device could be detonated either by remote control or by being attached to a car battery.

The C-4 is said to be the cheapest explosive device sold here at the rate of Rs [rupees] 150 a kilogramme. Other devices include the RDX which is very costly and is used in the devices available in powder form; the C-3 jelly; the TNT; and, lastly, dynamite.

All these devices are available in the whole of tribal area. They are generally imported from the United States and Russia and a couple of other countries, and are packed in plastic belts of three pockets, each containing one-and-a half kg of the jelly. It is learnt from sources in Darra Adam Khel that of late the demand of C-4 has increased and some of it was recently seized in a raid in Lahore.

Experts reject the theory that a 25-kg explosive was used in the Peshawar blast, and maintain that at least 100-kg device had been used. Since it had been fitted inside the bonnet of a car and connected to its battery, extensive devastation had resulted from flying metal. Besides they say, the thunderous sound also confirmed that a device of much greater intensity than 25 kgs had been used.

Some foreigners stationed in Peshawar have also been frequenting the Darra. Knowledgeable sources have named Haji Raees of Landikotal acting as a go-between between buyers and sellers of weapons and explosive material.

Police experts in Peshawar have yet to arrive at some definite conclusions as to the chemical used in the blast and its weight which would determine the intensity of the device. [passage omitted]

Interior Minister Comments on Peshawar Bombing

BK2712113995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The interior minister, Mr. Nasirullah Khan Babar, has said Pakistan is a victim of international terrorism and the government has taken a number of decisions in various high- level meetings during the past few days to overcome this problem. He was winding up the debate on the Peshawar bomb blast in the Senate today, during which several members took part and condemned this criminal act by terrorists.

The minister pointed out that one of the major reasons for this problem is Pakistan's support for the human rights of Kashmiris. He said Pakistan has always supported the Islamic cause and in keeping with this policy, it provided support to the Afghan people when the neighboring country was attacked by the communists. The interior minister categorically stated that Pakistan is not interfering in Afghanistan in any form and it fully supported the United Nations and OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] efforts to restore peace there.

About the Peshawar bomb blast, the minister said the car used in the incident as well as two Persian-speaking suspects have been identified.

The interior minister also assured the house that the government would welcome the Altaf Group [of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement] to the mainstream of our national politics provided they gave up arms and terrorism. He denied allegations about unabated killings and murders of their workers and supporters and said those killed were involved in terrorist activities. He was responding to a call- attention notice by Syed Ishtiyaq Azhar, Mr. Aftab Ahmad Sheikh, and Mrs. Nasreen Jalil. He said the Urdu-speaking people gave a lot of sacrifices for creation of Pakistan, but unfortunately a small group had wavered and taken up arms against the state. He invited them to hold public meetings in Karachi and said the government would provide protection to everyone against terrorism.

Editorial Views Possible Afghan Involvement

*BK2612113695 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu
25 Dec 95 p 10*

[Editorial: "Ban on PIA Flight to Tashkent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reliable sources, the Afghan Government has prohibited Pakistan International Airlines [PIA] planes flying between Pakistani cities and Tashkent from using Afghan airspace. As a result, PIA Flight PK261 to Tashkent had to be canceled. Fresh tension has arisen between Pakistan and Afghanistan following the Peshawar bomb blast. Some Afghan groups have expressed their inability to provide safe passage for PIA flights.

As far as the bomb explosion in Peshawar is concerned, according to the latest reports Pakistan's secret agencies have arrested four culprits in Torkham. Besides confessing their involvement in the explosion, they have also confirmed that one of their accomplices was killed in the blast and the diplomatic mission of our neighboring country refused to receive his dead body. According to some reports, these suspects will soon be shown on television.

The possibility of Afghanistan's involvement in this kind of subversive activity against Pakistan is further strengthened by the fact that Pakistan's embassy in Kabul has twice been attacked during Rabbani's rule. In the second attack the embassy building was set on fire and the Pakistani ambassador and other staff were severely beaten. An embassy employee was killed. Yet the Rabbani government did not even apologize for this incident. In view of this act by the thankless Afghan Government, there was a general impression in Pakistan that the attack was carried out by the Afghan Government itself. Now, after the arrest and confession of the alleged terrorists, the Afghan government has taken yet another extreme step against Pakistan.

Meanwhile, certain responsible Pakistani politicians are in favor of an all-out attack on Afghanistan. It is feared that more Afghan agents will carry out similar terrorist activities in Pakistan. In Gujranwala, five Afghan nationals were arrested and three bombs were recovered from their possession. One of their companions managed to escape. This indicates that Afghanistan will increase its terrorist activities against Pakistan.

Given this background, the ban on PIA flights to Tashkent will have a damaging affect on PIA's economic condition. Pakistan's links with the Central Asian states will be cut off; the land link is already cut due to the continuing civil war in Afghanistan. In retaliation, Pakistan can impose land and airspace restrictions on Afghanistan, but this is not a permanent solution to the problem. Pakistan should raise this issue with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the Organization of the Islamic Conference so the Rabbani administration is not left with any lame excuses.

Another method to check the intrigues of the Afghan rulers is the one demanded by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan [Pakistan Democratic Party leader]. If it finds proof of the Rabbani administration's involvement in the Peshawar bomb blast, Pakistan has the right to punish Afghanistan for its thanklessness. Pakistan should also consider the immediate expulsion of Afghan families staying illegally in Pakistan and the return of the 1.5 million Afghan refugees. It is impossible to catch terrorists and KHAD [Afghan secret service] agents who can easily infiltrate amid this huge population of Afghan refugees and illegal residents. Therefore, we must get rid of this problem in an appropriate manner.

Diplomats Asked Not To Go Outside Capital

BK2712101095 Islamabad THE NATION in English 27 Dec 95 pp 1, 5

[Report by "Our Staff Reporter"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The Foreign Office, for the second time in a row this week, has warned members of the diplomatic community here not to go outside the capital without seeking its approval.

This step, official sources say, is taken in view of the recent terrorist bomb explosions, especially last month's suicide bombing of the Egyptian embassy and last week's car bomb explosion in Peshawar.

In the first letter sent by the Foreign Office to all the diplomatic missions the envoys stationed in Pakistan were asked to take permission of the authorities concerned in the Foreign Office before traveling to other parts of the country.

The second letter from the Foreign Office, which the foreign missions received earlier this week, mentions that despite the previous government warnings regarding the possible danger to the security of diplomats across the country, the diplomats were still seen going out of the Capital without any prior information.

Thus, the Foreign Office urged the diplomats again not to do so, as elsewhere it may not be possible for the government authorities to provide them the protection that is available to them here. It is not yet clear whether the government is providing some additional security to diplomats who decide to leave the Capital for some outstation job after getting the Foreign Office permission.

Government Condemns Indian Arrests in Kashmir

BK2712112295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has strongly condemned the arrest of innocent people in occupied Kashmir by the Indian authorities. The condemnation was voiced by a Foreign Office spokesman while commenting on the reports of arrest of three elderly family members of a Kashmiri leader and human rights activist, Syed Nazir Gilani. The spokesman urged the international community to take note of the continued repressive tactics of the Indian forces and to exert pressure on India to prevent brutal treatment of the Kashmiri people.

Indian Troops Kill 1 in Fire on Border Villages

BK2412103995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Indian troops from across the Line of Control resorted to indiscriminate firing on different villages bordering Azad Kashmir, killing a woman and seriously injuring two persons. Reports reaching Muzaffarabad say the Indian troops fired mortars and small arms in many places as a result of which the woman was killed in Hot Spring area and the two persons were injured in Haji Pir and Keran areas. Complaint of these cease-fire violations has been lodged with the United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan.

Balochistan Assembly Official Killed in Quetta

BK2612143295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The deputy secretary of Balochistan Assembly Secretariat, Mr. Mohammad Ali, was shot dead this morning in Quetta. Unknown motorcyclists fired twice from a close range at his head with a TT pistol. The mobile police reached the spot at once and are investigating.

'Notorious Altaf Group Terrorist' Arrested in Karachi

BK2612153395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a press note, one person was killed as a result of shooting by unknown people in Karachi today.

According to the ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN, Criminal Investigation Agency personnel arrested Shakeel Bihari, a notorious Altaf Group terrorist, and five accomplices in Karachi and recovered arms from their possession.

FIA Investigation in Egyptian Embassy Blast Continues

BK2412101795 Islamabad PAKISTAN in Urdu 21 Dec 95 pp 1, 5

[Report by Special Correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rawalpindi — FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] Islamabad, after conducting an interrogation, has discharged 12 out of the 20 arrested suspects of the Egyptian Embassy bombing, who belong to various Islamic countries. While the FIA has obtained a remand of seven more days for the eight persons, these suspects have been brought to the district court under tight security. The suspects being detained are Mohammad Abdul Waheed and Mohammad Rafiq of Egypt, Mohammad Waheed Amir and Mohammad Yousuf of Jordan, Palestinians Ahmed and Mohammad Abdullah, Dr. Munir Yahya Sadiq of United States, and Mohammad Shabbir Gilani, a Syrian. They will be brought to court on 26 December. However, the suspects have strongly denied any involvement in the bombing.

Sindh Assembly Briefed on Karachi Violence

BK2112123695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sindh Assembly was informed today that 1,560 persons fell victim to the terrorists during violence in Karachi from January to August this year.

This information was given by the Sindh chief minister, Syed Abdullah Shah, during question hour. He said out of these victims, 967 were killed and 549 were injured. He said only six persons were reported to have died in police or judicial custody during this period for which judicial inquiry has already been ordered and investigation is under progress.

Replying to another question, he said that no locality was seized by the law enforcement agencies in Karachi and Hyderabad from January to August this year. Only particular houses were searched where there were reports of presence of wanted criminals and storage of illegal arms. The chief minister said that 69 persons were arrested in Karachi between January and August this year after house searches. Only seven were detained in Hyderabad and released after interrogation.

Minister: Government Fighting War on Terrorism

BK2512044395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mr. Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal has said investigations into the Peshawar bomb blast were on and the accused would be brought to book. Addressing a meet-the-press program at Nowshera Press Club, he said the entire nation had condemned this inhuman act and expressed its anger and anguish over the tragic incident.

He said the government is actively engaged against terrorist elements in Karachi and is fighting a war for the solidarity and integrity of the country there. He deplored that the opposition leader negatively responded to government's offer for dialogue on national issues and said though Nawaz Sharif had joined hands with MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement], ANP [Awami National Party], and G.M. Syed but his workers would never support these elements.

The minister of state for law and justice, Raza Rabbani, has said the government is committed to crush internal and external terrorists. Talking to newsmen in Rawalpindi yesterday, he also asked the opposition leader, Mian Nawaz Sharif, to reciprocate the government's offer for dialogue in the interest of the country.

In Karachi, a terrorist was killed while his other accomplices escaped following an exchange of fire with police in Liaquatabad area yesterday.

Asif on Government Action Against 'Militants'

BK2712103595 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 27 Dec 95 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 26 — Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali Tuesday declared that the government of Pakistan could continue to take action against Muslim militants staying here since Afghan Jehad days.

"I hope that they will go back to their respective countries as they are not required here," Asif said while addressing the participants of the 15th specialised diplomatic course of the Foreign Service Academy.

Recalling the devastating explosion at the Egyptian Embassy here, he said it was an act committed allegedly by foreign Islamic militants who probably belonged to Egypt.

"This was a very serious matter," the Foreign Minister remarked and added that the government had taken several decisions to counter such heinous acts. "We cannot be harassed or intimidated by such cowardly acts, he said.

Pakistan had recently announced that it would not allow any terrorist to use its soil for terrorism against any other country. It had also been declared that the government of Pakistan is closely reviewing performance and activities of around two hundred and five Afghan-related foreign NGOs [Nongovernment Organizations], operating in Pakistan.

Madera, a French NGO, which was allegedly involved in politically supporting Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, has already been asked to leave Pakistan by end of the current month.

In line with its policy to force the Arab nationals living in Pakistan to leave for their respective country, the government also recently extradited ten out of eleven Arab nationals sought by the Egyptian government.

The Foreign Minister also held the Kabul regime responsible for several incidents of terrorism against Pakistan saying that there was a sufficient evidence showing involvement of the hidden hands of Kabul regime in school bus hijacking incident from Peshawar last year ransacking of Pakistan Embassy in Kabul during his visit last year and September's attack on the Embassy by armed Afghans.

Referring to Peshawar blast, he hoped that Kabul government would not be involved in this heinous act.

He said Pakistan was facing great deal of problems with Afghanistan where the present Kabul regime had not been able to sit together with other political parties and believed in "military conquest."

"We have been endeavoring to persuade Kabul regime that it should work for achieving political and peaceful solution instead of seeking military conquests," he said and remarked that "our advice, however fallen on the deaf ear."

He reiterated that Pakistan would continue to support efforts of the United Nations and Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] for solution of the Afghan problem.

Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that Pakistan faces serious problems with India which neither wants to implement UN resolutions on the Kashmir issue nor has any desire to sit together with Pakistan for solution of the problem even under Simla Agreement.

He regretted that India was using force to suppress the rights of the Kashmiri people and not allowing them to exercise their right to self determination despite a clear commitment it had made in the United Nations.

Asif however, said that the government succeeded in its efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue bys effectively raising it at all international for a including the OIC.

'Rebel' Army Officers Prepare Legal Defense

BK2512084295 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Dec 95 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The families of charge-sheet rebel Army officers have pleaded that the time limit for arranging the 'legal defense' of the arrested officers should be extended. They have adopted the stance that as the field Court Martial is commencing hearing of the case on December 31, they have been left with very little time to arrange for legal defence, it was learnt.

Reliable sources have disclosed that wife of Maj-General (Retd) [retired] Zhaeer Abbasi will also appeal to the Field Court Martial, that the hearing of the case should be held at Rawalpindi instead of Attock. The sources said that to defend the officers a Legal Aid Committee, comprising Brig [Brigadier] (Retd) Gulzar, Commodore (Retd) Tariq Saeed and Major (Retd) Amir Afzal, has also been formulated.

According to the legal advisers the 'officers' will contend during the case hearing that action against them has been taken on the basis of a statement made by 'approver' [a suspect who becomes a prosecution witness] Col Liaquat Ali Raja and the Federal Sharia [Islamic] Court has given the ruling that no action can be taken on the basis of a statement by an approver.

It may be mentioned that the 'rebel officers' have also been accused of discussing the rebellion plot in a mosque near Islamabad Airport.

Major-Gen Abbasi briefed his wife that as in 1987 he provided the details of Indian military exercises to Government of Pakistan, the Indian Intelligence Agency RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] had 'marked' him.

He further said he was in charge of joint US-Pakistan military manoeuvres and he in his capacity, did not allow the said exercises in Siachen area and had opposed them contending that these exercises should have been held in American territory. After his proposal he was removed as in charge of these manoeuvres.

Possible U.S. Sanctions Against India Viewed

BK2312115095 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 22 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Sanctions Against India?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Washington is believed to be considering clamping sanctions against India for going ahead with plans to conduct an atomic explosion-its second since 1974-at the Rajasthan nuclear test site. New Delhi's denial and the ASIAN AGE claim that the "scientific activity" detected by U.S. spy satellites earlier was meant for a Prithvi test instead cannot be quite reassuring either because the missile is Pakistan-specific and it can also be fitted with a nuclear warhead. Islamabad has voiced concern over these developments, with Foreign Minister-Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali vowing an "appropriate response" within the - MTCR [Missile Technology Control Regime] parameters if New Delhi goes ahead with its missile test programme. There are as many as 45 nuclear facilities across India currently engaged in producing plutonium for its massive nuclear weapons project. It came to light at a recent hearing on South Asia organised by the U.S. House Sub-Committee on Asia and Pacific that "unlike Pakistan, India has never stopped producing the bomb-making material."

So New Delhi is apparently going ahead full steam with its nuclear plans. The militaristic orientation of New Delhi has not allowed the post-Cold War peace dividends to reach this beleaguered subcontinent and the thaw permeating the rest of the world has by-passed the region.

It is encouraging that Washington has at last taken notice of the Indian nuclear plans. But doesn't it seem rather late in the day? India gate crashed the nuclear club way back in 1974 with the explosion of a "peaceful nuclear device." It has since pursued the programme with a single-mindedness verging almost on an obsession. During all these years New Delhi has defiantly refused to sign the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty]. While the heat was turned full-blast on Islamabad for attempting to produce an "Islamic bomb," New Delhi was quietly allowed to go ahead with its [word indistinct] bomb. Nay, it was also provided full material and technological assistance in the venture. India has long since embarked on a missile programme as well and has already handed over the Prithvi to a special Indian army unit for deployment along the border with Pakistan. On the other hand, the one-time Brown waiver in the crippling Pressler sanctions against the most "allied ally" materialised as a great favour only after a lot of song and dance. Can India then be justifiably faulted for defying the nuclear norms set by the sole superpower." It is common knowledge that New Delhi has been nursing hegemonic ambitions in the region. It has been holding on to occupied Kashmir through brute military force in open defiance of the Security Council resolutions and the prevailing world opinion. The brutal repression unleashed in the disputed territory has remained no secret either in this age of information explosion. The freeze in Pakistan-India relations generated by the dispute has mainly been responsible for the tensions in the region. So, logically, sincere initiatives should be launched to seek a negotiated and equitable solution to this core issue between the two neighbouring states. No peace or disarmament initiative can succeed in the region unless this core dispute is first resolved. Sanctions can be an effective toll in bringing New Delhi to see reason. The nuclear clock has got to be reversed.

Editorial Criticizes U.S. Policy Against Iran

BK2412125395 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Destabilizing Iran"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Various moves by the United States against Iran, as reported by THE WASHINGTON POST, can only leave one aghast. The U.S. legislators and the U.S. administration do have the right to disagree with the policies of any country. They may even dislike a foreign government. But as the days of coup planning by CIA to change the governments in other lands are gone, to revive that policy can only be regretted. Repeated attempts by the United States in the past to overthrow Castro in Cuba, or more recently, to overthrow Saddam Hussein in Iraq, met with little success. That ought to have left a message. But it seems many of the conservatives in the United States are not quick learners. According to reports, the U.S. ultra conservative, Newt Gingrich, speaker of the House of Representatives, had an anti-Iran bill passed, through which an amount of 20 million dollars was allocated to plan the overthrow of the Iranian Government. When that was not accepted by the U.S. Administration, Gingrich refused to pass the government's bill for the U.S. intelligence activities till his proposal on Iran was accommodated in it. President Clinton, it seems has now been persuaded to agree to some sort of anti-Iran measures in return for Gingrich letting the administration's bill through. What Clinton has apparently agreed to do now is to encourage, or set into motion, such activities in Iran which would gradually bring about a change for greater "democratisation" of the government. While this move may not bring the kind of odium to the United States which the original plan of the "overthrow" would have, it is nevertheless against international law, the UN Charter and abhorrent to civilised society.

While one can only disapprove of the United States opting for such a course against our neighbour, which is also a brotherly Islamic state, some of the other measures already taken against Iran need to be reconsidered by the U.S. Administration. The U.S. Senate has already passed a bill tightening current U.S. sanctions against Iran, under which foreign companies doing business with Iran would be penalised. The House of Representatives is also considering a similar bill which would prohibit imports through companies which invest in Iran. The U.S. charges against Iran, that it promotes terrorism abroad and intends to build nuclear weapons, have already been denied by Iran. Therefore, taking such stringent measures purely on grounds of suspicion, can hardly be considered justified.

Accord Signed With Russia To Promote Shipping

BK2412123095 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Dec 95 p 14

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi (PPI) — Pakistan and the Russian Federation have signed an agreement for the promotion of shipping and ports in Pakistan.

The agreement follows talks held by the visiting Russian Federation Government delegation led by Andrey P.

Ermkov, Chief Expert Foreign Relations Division, Department of Maritime Transport with senior officials of Ministry of Communications Ports and Shipping, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Port Qasim Authority (PQA). According to president of Tristar Shipping Lines, Masood T Baghpates, Ermkov in talks with him here Saturday discussed possibilities of cooperation in shipping between Tristar and Russian Shipowners.

Sri Lanka

Troops Said To Foil Infiltration Bid, Bombing

BK2712115195 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops foiled a terrorist attempt to infiltrate their positions in Madagal on Christmas night. Troops fought fiercely to prevent the infiltrators from slipping in after the small team of attackers was detected, military sources said. One soldier was killed. Terrorists fled the area with their casualty. An operations headquarters spokesman said the attempt was made just days after troops moved into West Walikamam area to hunt terrorist units operating in the area. The military believe that terrorists were trying to test defenses west of Palaly Air Base. Ground commanders believe the Christmas Day attack was the beginning of a series of attempts to infiltrate Palaly defenses.

Meanwhile, the Army yesterday aborted a terrorist strike in Batticaloa town when troops defused two improvised explosive devices planted about half a mile away from the headquarters of the Army's Third Division and the district brigade headquarters. The two devices were identified as a landmine and a time bomb. They were found near the Batticaloa water tank.

LTTE Details Plight of Soldiers After Ambush

BK2712111995 (Internet) TAMIL EELAM NEWS WWW in Tamil 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Many more soldiers injured in the ambush at Shanthiveli in Batticaloa yesterday succumbed to their injuries today. It has been learned that the bodies of the dead and wounded soldiers were recovered only yesterday evening. Therefore, the condition of many of the wounded soldiers is stated to have futher worsened. It has also been learned that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] cadres, who penetrated that area all of a sudden by sea, carried out the attack and remained in the area till the evening. Hence, it is also understood that the soldiers had to face many problems entering that area. After sealing off the site of the combat, the soldiers have been carrying out search operations since yesterday evening. The soldiers have been carrying out this search operation secretly and are concerned not to let news about it leak out. Meanwhile, Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte, the minister of state for defense, who heard about this incident, held an urgent meeting with the military commanders of the Eastern Province. The attacks being carried out by the LTTE in the east have shocked the minister, who was very proud of recapturing Jaffna after a long time and handing it over to President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Telecommunication services between Jaffna and Wanni, which were temporarily suspended due to the military operation in Weligama, have been resumed. Offices for this purpose have been set up in Chavakachchery and Kilinochchi. Meanwhile, the head post office has made arrangements for the distribution of overseas mail to the people in Wanni, who migrated from Jaffna peninsula. Accordingly, the Postmaster General for Jaffna has announced that if the displaced persons show their current and permanent address to him, he will hand over their overseas mail.

Hospital sources have announced that Gerry Perera, Secretary in the Ministry of Health, has directed eight doctors, who, after working at the Jaffna Medical College Hospital, are currently working at Chavakachchery hospital, to come to Colombo immediately. This directive was sent to the dean of the Jaffna Medical College Hospital through the International Committee of the Red Cross the day before yesterday. The transfer of these doctors to Colombo at a time when Jaffna peninsula is experiencing a shortage of doctors, is nothing but an act of barbarity. It is to be noted that the Sri Lankan Government is planning to create a scarcity of doctors for the displaced people, who are hard hit by epidemics and the ban on medicines.

Those who went to Vavuniya from the north are not able to get military permits and have been staying in temporary camps in Vavuniya since last Wednesday [20 December]. It has also been reported that they have been prevented from going out of the camps.

LTTE Destroys Power Transformers in Ampara

BK2612100695 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0818 GMT 26 Dec 95

["LANKAPUVATH/OANA/POOL" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 26 Dec (LANKAPUVATH) — LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists have destroyed three power transformers and a high tension electric post at Pothuwil, Veramuhai, Vanniyar, and Viliniahi areas in the Ampara District.

Police are conducting investigations into these incidents which occurred on Sunday [24 December], states a press release issued by the operational headquarters of the Ministry of Defence. Around 2000 hours Monday at Siththaru, about 30 kms south of Trincomalee, troops in ambush confronted and attacked a group of Tigers. One injured soldier was admitted to the Naval Hospital there.

LTTE Notes Conflict Within Army on Operation

BK2212091695 (Internet) TAMIL EELAM NEWS Homgepage in Tamil 19 Dec 95 (Tentative)

["Compilation of the telephone messages of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam"; dated 19 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] Conflicting dispositions have surfaced among the Sri Lankan military authorities, who are engaged in preparations for the second phase of military operation. The views expressed by some officers — that the military has to strengthen its positions in the areas captured by it for which a large number of troops are needed and hence the second stage of operation is not feasible under the present circumstances — has created a dilemma amid military official circles. Besides, it has been learned that a controversy exists as to from where the second phase of operation should be launched. Under these circumstances, the Sri Lankan Government has continued procuring arms. It has been learned that of the weapons procured, battle tanks constitute a major portion. At this juncture, Deputy Minister for Defense Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte has stated that the next phase of operation will be launched very soon and that the remaining areas would be captured. He further stated that aircraft and tanks have been kept in combat readiness for this purpose.

The troops are engaged in search operations in Uyilankulam and Palligoda localities in the Trincomalee District. During these search operations, they arrested several civilians and shot at a 10- year old boy, grievously injuring him. At the same time, troops have been trying to set up a camp at Palligoda locality. It is to be noted that the camp that existed earlier in the area was ambushed and destroyed by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam].

A traitor was executed at a place called Mallikaitivu-Manalchenai in Trincomalee District last Saturday [16 December]. As this person known as Asir, alias Pakkiyaraja, showed the troops the place of movement of the freedom fighters and was thus responsible for the deaths of a number of freedom fighters and civilians, the sentence was carried out in his own residence.

The police have been imposing heavy penalties on trucks carrying kerosene. The Sri Lankan police extorted thousands of rupees in the form of penalties from the drivers of trucks that have been carrying kerosene without a permit. The truck owners, who earlier used to transport goods directly from Kilinochchi to Colombo, had obtained a permit from their zonal secretary. However, as the ban on the transport of goods from Vavuniya to the north is in force, the truck owners, who carry goods from Colombo to Vavuniya, could not get a permit once they bring goods from the capital to Vavuniya. Under these circumstances, the Sri Lankan police are forcibly imposing fines under the pretext of lack of permits in Medavachchi and some other Sinhalese areas on the Colombo-Vavuniya highway.

A mother known as Bhaskaran Parameswari from Dharmapuram in Kilinochchi handed over her two daughters to the secretary of LTTE's women's wing to engage them in Tamil Eelam freedom struggle. Moreover, while speaking to newsmen, she said that it is the LTTE, who can win freedom for the Tamils, and that it is possible only by strengthening their hands. It is to be noted that her other daughter is a great hero [Maveerar].

The LTTE's thirst is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

Troops Discover LTTE Leader's 'Luxury' Housing

BK2612094295 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0538 GMT 26 Dec 95

["LANKAPUVATH/OANA/POOL" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 24 Dec (LANKAPUVATH) — Government troops engaged in clearing operations in the northern Jaffna city, have discovered another luxury housing complex which had been used by LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Military sources told LANKAPUVATH that the five luxury-house complex was located near Sudumalai. It had been found that the Tiger leader had a series of similar houses in Jaffna, moving from house to house for reasons of security. Earlier, troops of Operation 'Riviresa' (Sunrays) too discovered another luxury house near the Kandasamy Kovil at Nallur where Prabhakaran entertained LTTE suicide squads prior to leaving on their assignments.

TULF Breaks From Alliance Talks on Ethnic Strife

BK2612122995 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front] has broken away from ad hoc Tamil alliance formed to discuss the ethnic strife with the president, as the government prepares to submit the draft devolution package before a Parliament select committee later next month, political sources said yesterday.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga promised Tamil political parties in separate talks this week that the package would be submitted before the select committee after the Sai Pongal Festival mid next month. The TULF will not be joining the other Tamil political parties in the discussions on the package or other issues and any possible chances of continuing a common front of Tamil parties have been ruled out, EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] leader and former MP Suresh Premachandran said.

TULF sources confirmed that they will not take part in any joint discussions with the government, but TULF President M. Sivasithamparam said he did not wish to comment on this week's talks with the president and their plans. The sources said one of the main reasons to break away from joint discussions was that the party had left; the parties did not have a common goal. [sentence as heard]

Tamil Parties Want To Preserve Devolution Package

BK2412131195 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A detailed draft of the government's political devolution package will be submitted to a parliamentary select committee by the middle of next month. Political sources say that Tamil parties are anxious to preserve the package in its original form. To do so, the government needs the support of the main opposition — United National Party [UNP]. Many Tamil politicians are, however, reported to be unhappy with the UNP over its silence on the devolution. President of the Tamil United Liberation Front M. Sivasithamparam said that he was surprised that the devolution package was not mentioned at the UNP's annual convention which was held recently. Politicians from across the spectrum have expressed satisfaction that the draft legislation will be ready by the Hindu festival of Thai Pongal in mid January.

Official on Restoring Jaffna Civil Administration

BK2612122695 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A police station will be opened in Jaffna town as a first step in restoring civil administration to the area. Already police stations have been opened in many regions liberated from terrorists, and plans are underway to open up many more.

In an interview with the (Yapapakhana) service of the SLBC yesterday, DIG [Deputy Inspector General of Police] Jaffna, Sirisena Herat, outlined the measures being taken to restore civil administration to the city. The DIG said that in the past the Tamil population had to face various difficulties to put up with the demands of the terrorists. However, with the launch of the military operations in Jaffna, the situation changed and the people even dared to openly oppose terrorists. The government is sparing no efforts to ensure the safety of displaced Tamil civilians of the north and to rehabilitate them. Joint efforts are being made by the Army and the police to resettle the residents of Jaffna.

DIG Sirisena Herat further said that the hearts and minds of the Tamil people should be won which would be the climax of their efforts. The government has already launched a program to ensure the security and to rehabilitate the Tamil population of the area. He said that the government has given instructions to the security forces on measures to speedily restore civil administration and to provide security to the people.

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